



SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT

-CY-YARMAN-

LIBRARY

UNIVERSITY OF
CALIFORNIA
SAN DIEGO

A. B. Daniels

BY CY WARMAN



SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT

A Story of the Great Burlington Strike

12mo. Cloth, \$1.25

THE STORY OF THE RAILROAD

(The Story of the West Series.)

Illustrated. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.50

D. APPLETON & COMPANY

NEW YORK

SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT

26817

SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT

A Story of the Great
Burlington Strike

BY CY WARMAN

AUTHOR OF THE STORY OF THE RAILROAD, THE
EXPRESS MESSENGER, TALES OF AN ENGINEER,
FRONTIER STORIES, ETC.



New York
D. APPLETON AND COMPANY
MDCCCXCIX

Copyright, 1899, by D. Appleton & Co.

❧ P R E F A C E ❧



Here is a Decoy Duck stuffed with Oysters.

The Duck is mere Fiction:

The Oysters are Facts.



*If you find the Duck wholesome, and the
Oysters hurt you, it is probably because you
had a hand in the making of this bit of
History, and in the creation of these Facts.*

T H E A U T H O R

SNOW ON THE § HEADLIGHT §

CHAPTER FIRST

GOOD managers are made from messenger boys, brakemen, wipers and telegraphers; just as brave admirals are produced in due time by planting a cadet in a naval school. From two branches of the service come the best equipped men in the railroad world—from the motive-power department and from the train service. This one came from the mechanical department, and he spent his official life trying to conceal the fact—striving to be just to all his employees and to show no partiality towards the department from whence he sprang—but always failing.

“These men will not strike,” he contended: “The brains of the train are in the engine.” “O, I don’t think,” Mr. Josler, the general superintendent, would say; and if you fol-

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

lowed his accent it would take you right back to the heart of Germany: "Giff me a goot conductor, an' I git over the roat."

No need to ask where he came from.

As the grievance grew in the hands of the "grief" committee, and the belief became fixed in the minds of the officials that the employees were looking for trouble, the situation waxed critical. "Might as well make a clean job of it," the men would say; and then every man who had a grievance, a wound where there had been a grievance or a fear that he might have something to complain of in the future, contributed to the real original grievance until the trouble grew so that it appalled the officials and caused them to stiffen their necks. In this way the men and the management were being wedged farther and farther apart. Finally, the general manager, foreseeing what war would cost the company and the employees, made an effort to reach a settlement, but the very effort was taken as evidence of weakness,

❧ CHAPTER I ❧

and instead of yielding something the men took courage, and lengthened the list of grievances. His predecessor had said to the president of the company when the last settlement was effected: "This is our last compromise. The next time we shall have to fight—my back is to the wall." But, when the time came for the struggle, he had not the heart to make the fight, and so resigned and went west, where he died shortly afterwards, and dying, escaped the sorrow that must have been his had he lived to see how his old, much-loved employees were made to suffer. Now the grievance committee came with an ultimatum to the management. "Yes, or No?" demanded the chairman with a Napoleonic pose. But the general superintendent was loth to answer.

"Yes, or No?"

Mr. Josler hesitated, equivocated, and asked to be allowed to confer with his chief.

"Yes, or No?" demanded the fearless leader, lifting his hand like an auctioneer.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“Vell, eef you put it so, I must say No,” said the superintendent and instantly the leader turned on his heel. He did not take the trouble to say good-day, but snapped his finger and strode away.

Now the other members of the committee got up and went out, pausing to say good morning to the superintendent who stood up to watch the procession pass out into the wide hall. One man, who confirmed the general manager’s belief that there were brains among the engine-men, lingered to express his regrets that the conference should have ended so abruptly.

The news of this man’s audacity spread among the higher officials, so that when the heads of the brotherhoods came—which is a last resort—the company were almost as haughty and remote as the head of the grievance committee had been.

From that moment the men and the management lost faith in each other. More, they refused even to understand each other.

❧ CHAPTER I ❧

Whichever side made a slight concession it was made to suffer for it, for such an act was sure to be interpreted by the other side as a sign of weakening. In vain did the heads of the two organizations, representing the engine-men, strive to overcome the mischief done by the local committee, and to reach a settlement. They showed, by comparison, that this, the smartest road in the West, was paying a lower rate of wages to its engine-men than was paid by a majority of the railroads of the country. They urged the injustice of the classification of engineers, but the management claimed that the system was just, and later received the indorsement, on this point, of eight-tenths of the daily press. Eight out of ten of these editors knew nothing of the real merits or demerits of the system, but they thought they knew, and so they wrote about it, the people read about it and gave or withheld their sympathy as the news affected them. When the heads of the brotherhoods an-

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

nounced their inability to reach an agreement they were allowed to return to their respective homes, beyond the borders of the big state, and out of reach of the Illinois conspiracy law. A local man "with sand to fight" was chosen commander-in-chief, and after one more formal effort to reach a settlement he called the men out.

On a blowy Sunday afternoon in February the chief clerk received a wire calling him to the office of the general manager. He found his chief pacing the floor. As the secretary entered, the general manager turned, faced him, and then, waving a hand over the big flat-topped desk that stood in the centre of his private office, said: "Take this all away, John. The engineers are going to strike and I want nothing to come to my desk that does not relate to that, until this fight is over."

Noting the troubled, surprised look upon the secretary's face the manager called him. "Come here John. Are you afraid? Does

❧ CHAPTER I ❧

the magnitude of it all appal you—do you want to quit? If you do say so now.”

As he spoke the piercing, searching eyes of the general manager swept the very soul of his secretary. The two men looked at each other. Instantly the shadow passed from the long, sad face of the clerk, and in its place sat an expression of calm determination. Now the manager spoke not a word, but reaching for the hand of his faithful assistant, pressed it firmly, and turned away.

There was no spoken pledge, no vow, no promise of loyalty, but in that mute hand-clasp there was an oath of allegiance.

At four o'clock on the following morning—Monday, February the 27th, 1888,—every locomotive engineer and fireman in the service of the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad Company quit work. The fact that not one man remained in the service an hour after the order went out, shows how firmly fixed was the faith of the men in the ability of the “Twin Brotherhoods” to beat

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

the company, and how universal was the belief that their cause was just. All trains in motion at the moment when the strike was to take effect were run to their destination, or to divisional stations, rather, and there abandoned by the crew.

The conductors, brakemen and baggage-men were not in the fight, and when directed by the officials to take the engines and try to run them or fire them, they found it hard to refuse to obey the order. Some of them had no thought of refusing, but cheerfully took the engines out, and—drowned them. That was a wild, exciting day for the officials, but it was soon forgotten in days that made that one seem like a pleasant dream.

The long struggle that had been going on openly between the officials and the employees was now enacted privately, silently, deep in the souls of men. Each individual must face the situation and decide for himself upon which side he would enlist.

§ CHAPTER I §

Hundreds of men who had good positions and had, personally, no grievance, felt in honor bound to stand by their brothers, and these men were the heroes of the strike, for it is infinitely finer to fight for others than for one's self. When a man has toiled for a quarter of a century to gain a comfortable place it is not without a struggle that he throws it all over, in an unselfish effort to help a brother on. The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers had grown to be respected by the public because of almost countless deeds of individual heroism. It was deferred to—and often encouraged by railway officials, because it had improved the service a thousand per cent. The man who climbed down from the cab that morning on the “Q” was as far ahead of the man who held the seat twenty years earlier, as an English captain is ahead of the naked savage whose bare feet beat the sands of the Soudan. By keeping clear of entangling alliances and carefully avoiding serious trouble, the

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Brotherhood had, in the past ten years, piled up hundreds of thousands of dollars. This big roll of the root of all evil served now to increase the confidence of the leaders, and to encourage the men to strike.

At each annual convention mayors, governors and prominent public men paraded the virtues of the Brotherhood until its members came to regard themselves as just a little bit bigger, braver and better than ordinary mortals. Public speakers and writers were for ever predicting that in a little while the Brotherhood would be invincible.* And so, hearing only good report of itself the Brotherhood grew over-confident, and entered this great fight top-heavy be-

* "*I dare say that the engineers' strike will end, as all strikes have hitherto ended, in disaster to the strikers. But I am sure that strikes will not always end so. It is only a question of time, and of a very little time, till the union of labor shall be so perfect that nothing can defeat it. We may say this will be a very good time or a very bad time ; all the same it is coming.*" — *W. D. Howells, in Harper's Weekly, April 21, 1888.*

❧ CHAPTER I ❧

cause of an exaggerated idea of its own greatness.

The Engineers' Brotherhood was not loved by other organizations. The conductors disliked it, and it had made itself offensive to the firemen because of its persistent refusal to federate or affiliate in any manner with other organizations having similar aims and objects. But now, finding itself in the midst of a hard fight, it evinced a desire to combine. The brakemen refused to join the enginemen, though sympathizing with them, but the switchmen were easily persuaded. The switchman of a decade ago could always be counted upon to fight. In behind his comb, toothbrush and rabbit's foot, he carried a neatly folded, closely written list of grievances upon which he was ready to do battle. Peace troubled his mind.

Some one signed a solemn compact in which the engineers bound themselves to support the switchmen—paying them as often as the enginemen drew money—and

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

the switchmen went out. They struck vigorously, and to a man, and remained loyal long after the Brotherhood had broken its pledge and cut off the pay of the strikers.* In this battle the switchmen were the bravest of the brave.

At the end of the first month of the strike the lines were pretty well drawn. There was no neutral ground for employees. A man was either with the company or with the strikers.

** At the annual convention held at Atlanta, in the autumn of that year (1888) the engineers dropped the sympathy-striking switchmen from the pay roll, at the same time increasing the pay of striking engineers from \$40.00 to \$50.00 a month.*

CHAPTER SECOND

“GOOD morning, John,” said the general manager coming softly through the little gate that fenced off a small reservation in the outer office, and beyond which the secretary and his assistants worked: “How goes the battle?”

“Well, on the whole,” said the chief clerk, gathering up a batch of telegrams that made up the official report from the various division superintendents; “it was a rough night. Three yard engines disabled in the Chicago yards, freight train burned at Burlington, head-end collision on the B. & M. Division, two engineers and one fireman killed, ware-house burned at Peoria, two bridges blown up in Iowa, two trains ditched near Denver, three—”

“Well! well!” broke in the general manager, “that will do.” The clerk stopped short, the office boy passed out through the open door and a great swell of silence surged into the room.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

After taking a few turns up and down the office, the manager stopped at the secretary's desk and added: "We must win this strike. The directors meet to-day and those English share-holders are getting nervous. They can't understand that this fight is necessary—that we are fighting for peace hereafter; weeding out a pestilence that threatens, not only the future of railway corporations, but the sacred rights of American citizens—the right to engage in whatever business or calling one cares to follow, and to employ whom he will at whatever wages the employer and employed may agree upon. Let these strikers win and we shall have a strike as often as the moon changes. When I endeavor to reach an agreement with them, they take it that the company is weakening, and the leaders will listen to nothing. I shudder to think what is in store for them and what they must suffer before they can understand."

❧ CHAPTER II ❧

With that the general manager passed into the private office and the chief clerk, who had been at his post all night, turned to a steaming breakfast which the porter had just brought from a café across the street. The postman came in, grave-faced and silent, and left a big bundle of letters on the secretary's desk. Most of the mail was official, but now and then there came letters from personal friends who held similar positions on other roads, assuring the general manager of their sympathy, and that they would aid his company whenever they could do so secretly and without exciting their own employees.

Many letters came from stockholders protesting vigorously against a continuation of the strike. Some anonymous letters warned the company that great calamity awaited the management, unless the demands of the employees were acceded to and the strike ended. A glance into the newspapers that came in, showed that three-fourths of the

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

press of the country praised the management and referred to the strikers as dynamiters and anarchists. The other fourth rejoiced at each drop in the stocks and called every man a martyr who was arrested at the instigation of the railroad company. The reports sent out daily by the company and those collected at the headquarters of the strikers agreed exactly as to date, but disagreed in all that followed.

The secretary, somewhat refreshed by a good breakfast, waded through the mail, making marks and notations occasionally with a blue pencil on the turned down corners of letters.

Some of the communications were referred to the general traffic manager, some to the general passenger agent, others to the superintendent of motive power and machinery. They were all sorted carefully and deposited in wicker baskets, bearing the initials of the different departments. Many were dropped into the basket marked "G.

❧ CHAPTER II ❧

M." but most of the matter was disposed of by the secretary himself, for the chief clerk of a great railway system, having the signature of the General Manager, is one of the busiest, and usually one of the brightest men in the company's employ.

The general manager in his private office pored over the morning papers, puffing vigorously now and then as he perused a paragraph that praised the strikers, but, when the literature was to his liking, smoked slowly and contentedly, like a man without a care. Such were the scenes and conditions in and about the general offices of the Chicago Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company when a light foot-step was heard in the hall and a gentle voice came singing :

*"Always together in sunshine and rain.
Facing the weather—"*

"Good morning, Patsy," said the chief clerk, looking up as Patsy paused at the gate, removed his hat and bowed two or three short

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

quick bows with his head without bowing his body.

"I beg your pardon," said Patsy, "I thought you were alone."

"Well, I am alone."

"No you're not—I'm here. Always together—"

"Come! Come! Patsy don't get funny this morning."

"Get funny! how can I get funny when I'm already funny? I was born funny—they had fun with me at the christening, and I expect they'll have the devil's own time with me at the wake. Always—"

"Sh! Sh!—Be quiet," said the secretary, nodding his head and his thumb in the direction of the door of the private office.

"Is the governor in?" asked Patsy.

"Yes."

"Now that's lucky for me, for I wanted to ask a favor and I want it to-day, and if the governor was not in you would say, 'I'll have to see the governor;' then when I came

❧ CHAPTER II ❧

back you would say 'The governor has left the office, and I forgot it,' but now that the governor is here you can do it yourself. I want to go to Council Bluffs."

"All right, Patsy, you can go if you can persuade those friends of yours to allow us to run a train."

"On the Q?"

"That's the only line we control."

"Not on your salary."

"Then you can't go," said the clerk, as he resumed the work before him.

"What's the matter with the North Western?" asked Patsy in an earnest, pleading tone.

"You ought to know that we can't give passes over a competing line."

"I do know it, but you can give me a letter over there. Just say: 'Please give Patsy Daly transportation, Chicago to Council Bluffs and return;' that'll do the business. You might add a paragraph about me being an old and trusted employe and—"

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“A bold and mistrusted striker, Patsy, would be nearer the card.”

“Now don’t bring up unpleasant recollections,” said Patsy with a frown that didn’t make him look as cross as some men look when they laugh: “It will be a neat way of showing that the Q is big enough to be good to her old employees, even if her stock is a little down. What do you say—do I get the pass—does mother see her railroad boy to-night?”

The door that was marked “Private” opened slowly and the general manager came in. The chief clerk shuffled the letters while Patsy made a desperate effort to look serious and respectful.

“What brings you here, Patsy?” asked the head of the road, for he was by no means displeased at seeing one of the old employees in the office who was not a member of a grievance committee.

“I want to get a pass, if you please sir, to run down to the Bluffs and see the folks.”

❧ CHAPTER II ❧

“Patsy wants a request for a pass over the North Western,” said the clerk, taking courage now that the subject was opened.

“Ah! is that all? now suppose I ask you to take a passenger train out to-night, will you do it?” asked the general manager, turning to Patsy.

“What’s the matter with the regular conductor?”

“Joined the strikers,” was the reply.

“But the papers say the strike is over.”

“It is! but a lot of you fellows don’t seem to know it.”

“I’m glad of it, and now I must hurry back, so as to be ready to take my run out. Do I get the pass?”

“And you expect, when the strike is off, to go back to your old place?”

“Sure,” said Patsy, “I don’t intend to quit you as long as you have a brake for me to turn.”

“There’s a lot of brakes that nobody is turning right now; come, you young rascal, will you go to work?”

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“Now,” said the young rascal, “you know what it says at the bottom of the time-card : ‘In case of doubt take the safe side.’ I’m waiting to see which side is safe.”

With that the manager went back to his desk and closed the door behind him, and the secretary went on with his work.

Patsy stood and looked out at the window for a while, and then said half to himself, but so the clerk could hear him : “Poor little mother, how she will miss me to-night.”

The secretary said nothing, but leaving his desk entered the office of his chief, and when they had talked over the business of the hour and read the story prepared by the passenger department for the press that day, he asked what should be done for Patsy.

“Oh ! give him the letter, I suppose, but he’s the only employee on the road I would do so much for.”

“And he’s the only one with nerve enough to ask it,” said the secretary.

❧ CHAPTER II ❧

“Yes, he is a bit nervy, John ; but it is n’t an offensive sort of nerve ; and then he’s so happy. Why, he really rests me when he comes in. He’s smart, too, too smart to be a striker and he may be of some use to us yet.”

In a little while Patsy went singing himself out just as he had sung himself in. The general manager sat watching the happy youth from the outer door of his room until the song and the sound of footsteps died away in the wide hall. Turning to his desk he sighed and said : “ Ah, well ! the English poet was right when he wrote :

*‘The world that knows itself too sad
Is proud to keep some faces glad !’*”

CHAPTER THIRD

PATSY, the postman and the newsgatherers, who left the headquarters of the company and wandered over to the Grand Pacific where the strikers held forth, must have been struck forcibly by the vast difference in the appearance of the two places upon this particular morning. At the first place all was neatness and order in spite of the deplorable condition of affairs outside; and a single man handled the almost endless flood of letters and telegrams that fell like autumn leaves upon his desk.

In fact, the office boy and the colored porter were the only people about the company's headquarters who showed any real anxiety.

At the headquarters of the strikers all was confusion and disorder. The outer offices and ante-rooms were filled with a vast crowd of men who idled about, smoked, swapped stories and swore; and some of them, I'm sorry to say, chewed tobacco

❧ CHAPTER III ❧

and flooded the floor with inexcusable filth. Even Mr. Hogan's private office was not private. Leading strikers and men prominent in the Brotherhood loafed there as the others loafed outside. Not more than half the men about the building had ever been employed by the Burlington company. There were scores of "tramp" switchmen and travelling trainmen, made reckless by idleness, as men are sometimes made desperate by hunger, with an alarmingly large representation of real criminals, who follow strikes as "grafters" follow a circus. If a striker lost his temper and talked as he ought not to talk, this latter specimen was always ready to encourage him; for whatever promised trouble for others promised profitable pastime for the criminal. If the real workers could keep clear of this class, as well as the idle, loafing element in their own profession, ninety per cent. of the alleged labor outrages would never be committed. Very likely there were a number of

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

detectives moving among the strikers, and they, too, have been known to counsel violence in order to perpetuate a struggle between labor and capital that they themselves might not be idle. It is only in the best organized agencies that detectives can be relied upon to take no undue advantage of those whom they are sent out to detect.

Over in another part of the same building, where the firemen held forth, the scene was about the same, save that the men there were younger in years and louder in their abuse of the railway officials; and generally less discreet.

*“Always together in sunshine and rain,
Facing the weather atop o’ the train,”*

sang Patsy as he strolled into the private office of Chairman Borphy, who was in charge of the firemen’s end of the strike. Borphy greeted Patsy pleasantly as did the others in the office, with one exception. Over in a window sat fireman George

❧ CHAPTER III ❧

Cowels, a great striker, and in the eyes of some of his enthusiastic friends a great man, and in his own estimation a great orator. Removing his cigar in order to give the proper effect to the expression he was about to assume, Cowels gave Patsy a hard searching look as he asked :

“Does that song of yours mean yourself and the general manager?”

“An’ if it does,” said Patsy, stepping close in front of his questioner: “What’s it *to* you?”

“Just this,” said Cowels: “You have been watched. You went to the general office this morning the moment it was open, and took a message for Mr. Stonaker to the general manager of the C. & N. W. Does that fit your case? Perhaps you will favor us with the result of your mission! Come, will the North Western help your friend out?”

At the conclusion of this eloquent burst of indignation Cowels smiled triumphantly, for, as Patsy paled into silence, the big fel-

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

low thought he had his man scared; but when Patsy took another step forward, forcing his opponent back to the window, and asked between his closed teeth, if Cowels meant to accuse him of betraying the strikers to the company every one in the room realized that something was about to happen. Perhaps Cowels thought so, too, but he was in a hole and could only answer Yes. The next instant Patsy drove his fist up under the orator's chin, and the back of that gentleman's head made a hole in the window. The bystanders, knowing the temper of both the men, sprang between them before any further damage could be done.

If Patsy had the best of the fight he had the worst of the argument. He had been openly accused of being a "spotter" and had made no explanation of his conduct; so when it was reported that he had gone to Council Bluffs over the North Western, the more ignorant and noisy of his associ-

§ CHAPTER III §

ates were easily persuaded that such a favor to a striker could only be secured upon the request of Mr. Stonaker and that request would be given only for services rendered ; and Patsy Daly was from that day doomed to walk under a cloud.

The long struggle was beginning to tell on the strikers. It was evidenced in the shiny suits worn by the men who met daily at the hall in town to discuss the strike. It was seen again in the worn wraps of many a mother and in the torn shoes of school-children. These were only the outer signs, the real suffering was carefully covered up—hidden in the homes where home comfort had become a reminiscence. The battle at first had been with the strong but now the brunt of it was being shifted to the shoulders of the women, the wives and mothers of the strikers. These patient martyrs, whose business it had been to look after the home, now suffered the humiliation of having door

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

after door closed to them and their children. Of a morning you might see them tramping through the snow from shop to shop trying to secure credit for the day. The strike would be over in a little while, they argued, but the struggling shop-keeper had his own to look after. The wholesale houses were refusing him credit and so he was powerless to help the hungry wives of worthy workmen. The men themselves were beginning to lose heart. Many a man who had not known what it was to be without a dollar now saw those dearest to him in actual want and went away to look for work on other roads. Finally, a monster union meeting was called for the purpose of getting an expression of opinion as to the advisability of making the best possible terms with the company and calling the strike off. Here the engine-men, trainmen and switchmen met, but the radical element was in the majority, and the suggestions of the heads of the various Brotherhoods that the strike

❧ CHAPTER III ❧

be called off were howled down by the unterrified. It was at this meeting that a tall, powerful, but mild mannered man, stood up in the face of all the opposing elements and advised that the strike be ended at once. He did not suggest this from a selfish motive, he said. He was a single man and had money enough to keep himself in idleness for a year, but there were hundreds of families who were in want, and it was for these he was pleading. The speaker was interrupted repeatedly, but he kept his place and continued to talk until the mob became silent and listened out of mere curiosity. "You can never hold an army of hungry men together," said the speaker; "you can't fight gold with a famine. The company, we are told, has already lost a million dollars. What of it? You forget that it has been making millions annually for the past ten years. What have we been making? Lots of money, I'll admit, but none of it has been saved. The company is rich, the

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

brotherhoods are bankrupt. From the remotest corners of the country comes the cry of men weary of paying assessments to support us in idleness. To-day some sort of settlement might be made—to-morrow it may be too late."

At this juncture the mob howled the speaker down again. Men climbed over benches to get at the "traitor." A man who had been persuaded to leave the company, and who had been taken into the order only the day before, tried to strike the engineer in the face. In the midst of the excitement, George Cowels of the Fireman's Brotherhood leaped upon the platform and at sight of him and the sound of his powerful voice the rioters became quiet.

"I think," he began slowly to show how easy it was for a truly great leader to keep cool in the hottest of the fight, "I think I can explain the action of the last speaker." Here he paused and looked down into the frank face of Dan Moran and continued:

§ CHAPTER III §

“Mr. Moran, as many of you know, has one of the best runs on the road. He has had it for a good many years and he loathes to leave it. By denying himself the luxury of a cigar and never taking a drink he has managed to save up some money. He is a money-getter—a money-saver and it hurts him to be idle. I have been firing for him for five years and in all that time he has never been the man to say : ‘Come, George, let’s have a drink or a cigar.’ Now I propose that we chip in and pay Mr. Dan Moran his little four dollars a day. Let us fight this fight to a finish. Let there be no retreat until the proud banner of our Brotherhood waves above the blackened ruins of the once powerful Burlington route. Down with all traitors : on with the fight.”

At the conclusion of this speech the audience went wild. When order had been partially restored a vote was taken, when it was shown that seven-eighths of the men were in favor of continuing the strike.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

The engineers had really been spoiled by success. At the last annual convention they had voted to exterminate the classification system, and had passed a law making it impossible for the head of the organization to make any settlement that included a continuation of classification. The scalps of the Atchison, the Alton, the Louisville and Nashville, and a number of other strong companies dangled at the belt of the big chief of the Engineers' Brotherhood. These were all won by diplomacy, but the men did not know it. They believed that the show of strength had awed the railway officials of the country and that the railway labor organizations were invincible. A little easing off by the Brotherhood, and a little forbearance on the part of the management might, at the start, have averted the great struggle; but when once war had been declared the generals on both sides had no choice but to fight it out to a finish.

CHAPTER FOURTH

“CAN you spare me a little money, George?” asked Mrs. Cowels, adjusting her last year’s coat.

“What do you want of money?”

“Well—it’s Christmas eve, and I thought we ought to have something for Bennie. He has been asking me all evening what I expected from Santa Claus, never hinting, of course, that he expected anything.”

“Well, here’s a dollar.”

Mrs. Cowels took the money and went over to the little store.

There were so many things to choose from that she found it difficult to make a selection. Finally she paid a quarter for a tin whistle and two bunches of noise—that was for the boy. With the remaining seventy-five cents she bought a pair of gloves for her husband.

“Anybody been here to-day?” asked Cowels of his wife when she came back from the store.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“Yes, Mr. Squeesum, secretary of the Benevolent Building Association, was here to see you about the last two payments which are over-due, on the house.”

“What did you tell him?”

“I told him that we had no money.”

“What did he say?”

“He said that was very strange, as the Brotherhoods were pouring thousands of dollars into Chicago to aid the strikers. What becomes of all this money, George? You never seem to get any of it.”

“We pour it out again,” said Cowels, “to the army of engine-men who are coming here from the Reading and everywhere to take our places. We hire them—buy them off—bribe them, to prevent them from taking service with the company, and yet it seems there is no end to the supply. For every man we secure the company brings a score, and we are losing ground. Members of the Brotherhood everywhere are growing weary of the long struggle. They have good

❧ CHAPTER IV ❧

jobs and object to paying from six to twelve dollars a month to support the strikers. Some have even refused to pay assessments and have surrendered their charters. Anybody else here?"

"Yes, a man named Hawkins. He wanted room and board."

"What did you tell him?"

"I told him we had never kept roomers or boarders, but he said he liked the place—for me to speak to you, and he would call again."

"Huh! he must like the place. Well, I guess we can get along some way," said Cowels, and then he sat and looked into the fire for a while without saying anything. When Mrs. Cowels had put the baby down she came and sat near her husband and they began to discuss the future. They had bought their little home a year and a half ago for twelve hundred dollars. They had lived economically and had been able to reduce the debt to six hundred dollars. But

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

when the strike came they were unable to keep up the payments and now the association had begun to push them. If they did not pay within the next thirty days the real estate company with the soft sounding title would foreclose the mortgage. When they had talked this all over, Mrs. Cowels proposed that they take the stranger in, but her husband objected. "I didn't want to tell you, George," said the brave little woman, "but there was another caller. The grocer and butcher was here this morning and we can get no more meat or groceries until we pay. He is a poor man, you know, and he can't keep up the families of all the strikers. I didn't want to worry you with this, George, but since you are opposed to me helping by taking a lodger I will tell you that something must be done."

Cowels lighted a fresh cigar. That was the third one since supper. They cost all the way from two to five cents apiece, but Mrs. Cowels knew that he was worried

❧ CHAPTER IV ❧

about lodge matters and if she thought anything about it at all, she probably reasoned that it was a good thing to be able to smoke and forget.

“I made the speech of my life to-day,” said the striker, brushing the ashes lightly from his cigar. “The hall was packed and the fellows stood up on their chairs and yelled. One fellow shouted, ‘Three cheers for the next Grand Master,’ and the gang threw up their hats and hollered till I thought they’d gone wild. Nora, if there was a convention to-morrow I’d win, hands down.”

Mrs. Cowels smiled faintly, for to her way of thinking there were other things as important as her husband’s election to the position of Grand Master of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen, and she changed the subject. Presently the door-bell sounded, so loud and piercing that the sound of it waked the baby. The man who had pulled the bell knew at once that he had made no mistake. He had noticed when

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

he called that morning that the bell upon the door had once done service in the cab of a locomotive, and had made a note of the fact. While Mrs. Cowels hushed the baby her husband answered the bell and when Mr. Hawkins gave his name and made his wants known, Cowels told him shortly that they did not keep lodgers. He knew that, he said, and that was one of the reasons why he was so anxious to come, but Cowels, who liked to show his authority at all times, shut the door, and the stranger was not taken in.

That night when the orator was dreaming that he had been chosen Grand Master of the Brotherhood, his wife stole out of the room and put the things in Bennie's sock, and then, just to please Bennie, she put a rubber rattle in the baby's little stocking. Her husband, being a great thinker, would not consent to having his hosiery hung up, so she would wait till breakfast time and hide the gloves under his plate. Then she

§ CHAPTER IV §

went over to tuck the cover in around Bennie. He was smiling—dreaming, doubtless, of red sleds and firecrackers—and his mother smiled, too, and kissed him and went back to bed.

CHAPTER FIFTH

IT was a rough, raw, Chicago day. The snow came in spurts, cold and cutting from the north and the scantily dressed strikers were obliged to dance about and beat their hands to keep warm. Special mounted police were riding up and down the streets that paralleled the Burlington tracks, and ugly looking armed deputies were everywhere in evidence. The forced quiet that pervaded the opposing armies served only to increase the anxiety of the observing. Every man who had any direct interest in the contest seemed to have a chip on his shoulder.

At ten o'clock the strike was to be extended to all connecting lines, the switching yards and stock yards. When the hour arrived the switchmen threw up their caps and quit. Now the different companies made an effort to replace the strikers and trouble commenced. The deputies, who had been aching to get a whack at the strikers

❧ CHAPTER V ❧

for countless cursings which they had received, now used their guns unmercifully upon the unprotected heads of the men, and the police, who disliked and refused to associate with the deputies, used their clubs upon all who resisted them. By eleven o'clock the whole city was in a state of riot and men bruised and bleeding were loaded into wagons and hurried away until the jails were filled with criminals, bums, deputies and strikers. The police courts were constantly grinding out justice, or decisions intended to take the place of justice. Mothers were often seen begging the magistrates to release their boys and wives praying for the pardon of their husbands. These prayers were often unanswered and the poor women were forced to return to a lonely home, to an empty cupboard and a cold hearth.

In the midst of the rioting on this wild day came Patsy Daly strolling up the track singing :

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

*“Always together in sunshine and rain
Facing the weather atop o’ th’ train.
Watching the meadows move under the stars
Always together atop o’ th’ cars.”*

“Hello ! there !” came from a box car.

“Hello to you,” said Patsy as he turned out to see what the fellow was in for. “Now, what the divil you doin’ caged up in this car ?”

“I’m hidin’ from the strikers,” said the man, peeping cautiously out.

“Faith, and I’m one of them myself,” says Patsy, “and I suppose you’re after takin’ my place, ye spalpeen ; I have a right to swat your face for you, so I have.”

“You could n’t do it if I was opposed,” said the stranger opening the door.

“Oh ! could n’t I ? then let yourself drop to the ground till I take a little of the conceit out of you.”

“No, I won’t fight you,” said the man, “I like your face and I want you to help me out.”

“And I like your nerve ; now, what’s your

❧ CHAPTER V ❧

pleasure? Have you been working in this strike?"

"I started to work this morning only to get something to eat on."

"Are you a railroad man?"

"I'm a switchman. I was foreman in the yards at Buffalo, had a scrap with the yard-master who had boasted that he would not have a switchman he could n't curse, an' got fired."

"Did you lick him?"

"Yes."

"Good and plenty?"

"Yes."

"Go on with your story."

"Well," said the man, seating himself in the door of the car, "I started out to get work—had my card from the Union and felt sure of success. I had only been married a year, but of course I had to leave my wife in Buffalo until I got located. When I applied for work I was asked for references and I had none. I told them where I had

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

worked ; they asked me to call later, and I called, only to learn that they didn't need any more men. This performance was repeated in every town I struck, until I began to believe that I had been blacklisted. In time my money gave out. I wrote to my wife and she sent me money. When that was gone I sent for more, not stopping to think that she had to eat, too, and that I had given her but ten dollars when I left home ; but she sent me money.

Then there came a time when she could not send me anything ; I could not keep up my dues in the Union, so was expelled. After that I found it hard to get passes. Lots of times I had to steal them, and finally—for the first time in my life—I stole something to eat. Say, pardner, did you ever get so hungry that the hunger cramped you like cholera morbus ? ”

“ No.”

“ Then I reckon you've never stole, or what's worse, scabbed ? ”

❧ CHAPTER V ❧

“No.”

“Well—I’ve done both, though this is the first time I’ve scabbed. As I was sayin’ I got down so low that I had to steal, and then I thought of my wife, of how terrible it would be if she should have to steal, or maybe worse, and the thought of it drove me almost crazy. She was a pretty girl when I married her, an orphan only eighteen and I was twenty-eight. I determined to go home at once, but before I could get out of town I was arrested as a vag and sent up for sixty days. I thought at that time that my punishment was great,—that the mental and physical suffering that I endured in the workhouse was all that I could stand,—but I’ve seen it beaten since. At last they told me that I could go, but that I would be expected to shake the city of Chicago before the sun rose on the following day, and I did. I hung myself up on the trucks of a Pullman on the Lake Shore Limited and landed in Buffalo just before dawn.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

As I hurried along the old familiar streets I noticed a crowd of people standing by a narrow canal and stopped to see what the excitement was. I saw them fish the limp and lifeless form of a woman out of the muddy water and when the moonlight fell upon her face it startled me, for it was so like her face. A moment later I got near enough to see that the victim was a blonde, and my wife was brunette. Presently I came to the house where we had lived, but it was closed and dark. I aroused a number of the neighbors, but none of them knew where the little woman had gone.

“‘Shure,’ said an old woman who was peddling milk, ‘I don’t know phere she’s at at all, at all. That big good-fur-nothin’ man o’ hern has gone along and deserted of her an’ broke the darlint’s heart, so ’e ’as an’ the end uv it all will be that she’ll be afther drownin’ ’erself in the canal beyant wan uv these foine nights.’

“All through the morning I searched the

❧ CHAPTER V ❧

place for her, but not a trace could I find. It seemed that she had dropped out of the world, utterly, and that no one had missed her. Finally I was so hungry that I begged a bite to eat and went down by the canal and fell asleep. Here a strange thing happened. I had a dreadful dream. I dreamed that I saw my wife being dragged from the dark waters of the canal. She had the same sad, sweet face, but not the same hair. I awoke in a cold sweat. I was now seized with an irresistible longing to look once more upon the face of the dead woman whom I had seen them fish from the foul waters that morning, and I set out for the morgue. I entered unnoticed and there lay the dead woman with her white hands folded upon her dead breast. She had the same sad, sweet face, but not the same hair, but it was she—it was my wife.”

The vag let his head fall so that his eyes rested upon the ground. Patsy fished something from his vest and holding it out to

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

the man, said: "Here's a one-dollar bill and a three-dollar meal ticket—which will you have?"

"Gi' me the pie-card."

"Which shows you're not a regular bum," said Patsy.

"No," said the man, eyeing the meal ticket with its twenty-one unpunched holes. "I never cared for liquor, only once in a while when a bum makes a lift I take a nip just to stop the awful gnawing, cramping pain of hunger, but it only makes you feel worse afterwards. But it's interesting," said the tramp, thoughtfully. "If it were not for the hunger and cold this new life that I have dropped into wouldn't be half bad.

You get a closer glimpse of the miseries of mankind and a better notion of the causes that bring it all about. It educates you. Now take this fight for instance. You fellows feel sure of success, but I know better. Only two men of all the vast army of strikers have deserted so far, but wait. Wait till the

❧ CHAPTER V ❧

pain of hunger hits you and doubles you up like a jack-knife, and it's sure to come. Behind the management there are merciless millions of money: behind the strikers the gaunt wolf of hunger stalks in the snow. Can you beat a game like that? Never. And after all what right have you and your people to expect mercy at the hands of organized capital? Does the Union show mercy to men like me? To escape the blight of the black-list I changed my name. Three times I found work, but in each instance the company were forced to discharge me or have a strike. I was not a Union man and so had to steal a ride out of town. Once I asked a farmer for work and he set me to digging post holes and every time a man came by I hid myself in the grass. 'What you hidin' fur?' the farmer asked. Then I told him that I didn't belong to the Union.

" 'What Union?' says he.

" 'The post-hole Union' says I—'in fact, I don't belong to any Union.'

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“ ‘They ain’t no post-hole Union,’ says the farmer indignantly, ‘an’ you know it. What you ’re givin’ me is hog-wash—you ’ve been stealin’. Here’s a quarter fur what you ’ve done—now git.’

“I tried to reason with him, but he only shook his thick head and began whistling for his dog, and I got. Yes, pardner, it seems to me that the tyranny of organized capital and the tyranny of organized labor are close competitors, and in their wake come the twin curses—the black-list and the boycott. Hand in hand they go, like red liquor and crime. But you can’t right these wrongs the way you ’re headed now,” said the philosopher. “Everything is against you. Wealth works wonders. The press, the telephone through which the public talks back to itself, is hoarse with the repetition of the story of your wrong-doings. Until the Government puts a limit to the abuses of trusts and monopolies, and organized labor has learned that there are other interests which

❧ CHAPTER V ❧

have rights under the Constitution, there will be no peace on earth, no good will toward man. When the trusts are controlled, and labor submits its grievances to an impartial, unbiased board of arbitration, then there will be peace and plenty. The wages that you are now losing and the money squandered by vulgar and ignorant leaders, will then be used in building up and beautifying homes. The time thrown away in useless agitation and in idleness will be spent for the intellectual advancement of working men, and the millions of money lost in wrecked railroads will find its way to the pockets of honest investors."

While this lecture, which interested Patsy, was being delivered the two men had become oblivious of their surroundings, but now the wild cry of a mob in a neighboring street, the rattle of sticks and stones and the occasional bark of a six-shooter brought them back to the business before them.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Wave after wave the rioters rolled against the little band of officers, but like billows that break upon a stony shore they were forced to roll back again. Like the naked minions of Montezuma, who hurled themselves against the armored army of the Spaniards, the strikers and their abettors were invariably beaten back with bruised heads and broken bones. If a luckless striker fell he was trampled upon by the horses of the mounted police or kicked into unconsciousness by the desperate deputies.

“Can you get me out of this so I can have a go at this pie-card?” asked the man.

“Yas,” said Patsy, leaping into the car. “Skin off your coat.”

When the two men had exchanged coats and caps the vag strolled leisurely down the track and in a little while Patsy followed. He had not gone three cars before the mob saw him and with the cry of “The scab! the scab!” sent a shower of sticks and stones after the flying brakeman. A rock struck

§ CHAPTER V §

Patsy on the head and he fell to the ground. The cap, which he had worn well over his eyes, fell off, and he was recognized by one of the strikers before his ribs could be kicked in. "Begad," said the leader of the mob, "it's the singin' brakeman. Th' bum have robbed 'im uv 'es clothes an' giv' us the slip," and they picked Patsy up and carried him away to the hospital.

CHAPTER SIXTH

THREE kinds of meetings were held by the strikers. Public meetings, open to everybody, union meetings, open to any member of the several organizations engaged in the strike, and secret sessions held by the various Brotherhoods, to which only members of that particular order were admitted.

Many things were said and done at these secret sessions that were never printed, or even mentioned outside the lodge-room, save when a detective happened to be a member, or when a member happened to be a detective.

At one of these meetings, held by the striking firemen, the head of that organization startled the audience with the declaration that the strike was going to end disastrously for the strikers. In fact, he said, the strike was already lost. They were beaten. The only point to be determined was as to the extent of the thrashing. This red rag, flung in the faces of the "war faction,"

❧ CHAPTER VI ❧

called forth hisses and hoots from the no-surrender element. A number of men were on their feet instantly, but none with the eloquence, or even the lung power to shut the chief off. Many of the outraged members glanced over at Cowels, who always sat near the little platform at the end of the hall in order that he might not keep his admirers waiting when they called for a speech. The greatest confusion prevailed during the address of the head of the house. Cowels, the recognized leader of the war party, sat silently in his place, though frequently called upon to defend the fighters. As their chief went on telling them of the inevitable ruin that awaited the strikers, the more noisy began to accuse him of selling them out. One man wanted to know what he got for the job, but the master, feeling secure in that he was doing his duty, gave no heed to what his traducers were saying. Amid all the turmoil Cowels sat so quietly that some of the more suspicious began to

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

guess, audibly, that he was "in with the play." But there was no play, and if there had been Cowels would not have been in with it. Cowels was thinking. Suddenly he leaped upon his chair and yelled: "Throw 'im out!" He did not use the finger of scorn upon the master, or even look in his direction. He merely glared at the audience and commanded it to "Throw 'im out!"

"We are fighting a losing fight," repeated the chief, "and you who fight hardest here will be first to fall," and he looked at Cowels as he spoke. "It could not be pleasant to me, even with your respectful attention, to break this news to you. I do it because it is my duty. But now, having said what I had to say, let me assure you that if a majority of you elect to continue the fight, I will lead you, and I promise that every man of you shall have his fill."

This last declaration was rather a cooler for Cowels. It took a vast amount of wind out of his sails, but he was on his feet and so

❧ CHAPTER VI ❧

had to make a speech. He was not very abusive, but managed to make it plain that there were others ready and able to lead if their leader failed to do his duty. When he had succeeded in getting his train of thought out over the switches his hearers, especially the no-surrenderers, began to enthuse. His speech was made picturesque by the introduction of short rhymes, misquotations from dead poets, and tales that had never been told in type. "If," he exclaimed dramatically, "to use a Shakesperian simile, the galled wench be jaded, let him surrender his sword to some one worthy of the steel." The orator worked the Shakesperian pedal so hard that some of his hearers expressed a desire to know more about the distinguished poet. Finally, when he became too deep for them, a man with a strong clear voice shouted a single word—the name of a little animal whose departure from a sinking ship makes sailors seek the shore—and Cowels closed like a snuff-box.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Now the casual observer would say of the great orator : he has money ; his family is not in want. But the statement would have been incorrect.

The Cowelses, like hundreds of other families, were without money, without credit, and would shortly be without food. The last money they had received from the Brotherhood had gone to pay the interest on the money due the Benevolent Building Association, for fuel, and to pay the milkman who was bringing milk for the baby. It would be forty or fifty days before another assessment could be made and the money collected. The outlook was gloomy. Mr. Hawkins had called again and offered ten dollars a month for the little spare room on the second floor, but Cowels would not consent.

But at the very moment when he was making this speech his wife was returning empty-handed from the bakery. Bennie had been watching, waiting at the window for

❧ CHAPTER VI ❧

her, and when she saw him staring at her, saw the tears come into his innocent eyes, she took him in her arms and wept as she had not wept before. They had breakfasted on bread and water. It was now past noon and they were all hungry. She gave Bennie some of the baby's milk, and then sat down to think. The door-bell rung. "I was just passing by," said Mr. Hawkins, "and thought I'd stop and see if there was any show to get that room. I work for the plumber in the next block, so you see it would be handy for me."

"Would you pay in advance?" asked Mrs. Cowels.

"I shouldn't mind," said the plumber, "if it would be of any advantage to you."

"Then you can have the room."

"Very well," said the man, apparently delighted with his bargain, and he gave her a crisp ten-dollar note. He also gave Bennie a big, red apple, and looked surprised when the boy began to bite great chunks out of it.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

That evening when Cowels came home he found the house filled with the fumes of boiled beef, and it put him in a good humor at once. He was hungry, having had nothing all day but a glass of beer and a free lunch.

"They's a man up-stairs," said Bennie, shoving his empty plate up for another load of boiled beef. Mrs. Cowels smiled a faint smile, and her husband asked :

"Who is this fellow ?"

"He's a plumber," was the reply, "and he seems like a very nice man."

"Did he pay a month in advance ?"

"Yes."

"Well, I don't like the idea of having strangers in the house," said Cowels, "and I wish you had not taken him in."

"I dislike it too, George," said Mrs. Cowels, "but the baker had refused me a loaf of bread, the children were hungry and you might as well know now that I can never see my babies suffer for want of food, and

❧ CHAPTER VI ❧

you need not be surprised at anything I may do to supply their wants."

Cowels had never seen his wife display so much spirit and it surprised him. "It's all very well," she went on, "to prate about honor and loyalty to the Brotherhood, but an obligation that entails the suffering of innocent women and children is not an honorable obligation and ought not to exist. A man's first duty is to his family. My advice to you would be to miss a few meetings and go and try to find something to do. Think how we have denied ourselves in order to have a place of our own, and now it's all to be taken from us, and all because of this senseless and profitless strike."

"By George, she's a cracker-jack!" said Hawkins, who had been listening down the stove-pipe.

Cowels made no reply to his wife, but he was thinking. In fact, he had been thinking all the way home. He had been interrupted twice that day while addressing the meet-

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

ing. One fellow had asked who the devil Shakespeare was, and if he had ever done anything for the Union. Another man had said "rats," and the orator was sore.

Now, when he had thought it all over, he surprised his wife as much as she had surprised him. "They're all a lot of unletterate ingrates," said Cowels, "and for two cents I'd shake the whole show and go to work. If they turn me down at the convention, and this strike is not settled, I'll take an engine."

Mr. Hawkins gave a low whistle.

"No, you must never do that, George, after all you've said against such things; it would not do."

"Then they must not drive me to it," said Cowels. "I've tried to show them the way to success, even to lead them, and they have the nerve to guy me. I'll fool 'em yet if they trifle with me."

"That's what I thought all along," mused Hawkins. "It was not the Brotherhood

❧ CHAPTER VI ❧

that Mr. Cowels was working so hard for, but Mr. Cowels. Well, he will be just as eager to succeed in another direction — he's ambitious."

CHAPTER SEVENTH

THE great strike, like a receding sea, revealed heaps of queer wreckage. Men who had once been respected by their fellows, but who had drifted down the river of vice now came to claim the attention of the strikers or the company. Most conspicuous among them was drunken Bill Greene. Three months ago he would have been kicked out of a company section house or passed by a Brotherhood man without a nod. Then he was "Old Bill;" now they called him Billy.

In his palmy days he had wooed, and won the heart of Maggie Crogan, a pretty waitress in the railway eating-house at Zero Junction. Maggie was barely eighteen then, a strawberry blonde with a sunny smile and a perpetual blush. In less than a year he had broken her heart, wrecked her life and sent her adrift in the night. His only excuse was that he was madly in love with Nora Kelly, but Nora, having heard the story of

§ CHAPTER VII §

Maggie's miserable life, turned her back on Greene and married George Cowels, then a young apprentice in the shops. Inasmuch as it was about the only commendable thing he ever did, it should be put to Greene's credit that he did really love Nora Kelly; but, being a coward with an inherited thirst, he took to drink the day she turned him down; and now, after a few wasted years he and Maggie—old red-headed Mag they called her—had drifted together, pooled their sorrows and often tried to drown them in the same can of beer. She worked, when she worked at all, at cleaning coaches. He borrowed her salary and bought drink with it. Once he proposed marriage, and ended by beating her because she laughed at him. Before the strike he had been forced to keep sober four days out of a week. Now he was comfortably tanked at all times. He had been a machinist and round-house foreman, and the company saw in him a fair "emergency" engineer, and was constantly

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

watching for an opportunity to try him on one of the fast express trains.

At last he was called to take out a passenger run. The round-house foreman had gone personally to fetch "Billy" from the bar-room near the Grand Pacific where he was waiting for a Brotherhood man to drop in and buy him a drink. When told that he was wanted to take out the Pacific express, the bum straightened up, hitched his suspenderless trousers and asked: "Who're you?" "I'm the foreman; come and have a bite o' breakfast and let's be off."

"Well—folks gen'ly drink afore they eat—come on, le's have a horn. Here, bar-keep, give us a couple o' slugs."

"Got any dough?"

"Now don't git gay—I'm goin' down to take me run out—here's me foreman."

"But you must not drink," broke in the official, "when you are going out on an express train."

"What?"

❧ CHAPTER VII ❧

“ You must not drink.”

“ Then I don't work. Th' Brotherhood 'll pay me four dollars a day to sit right here and keep three gages an' a flutter in the stack—go on with yer damn ol' railroad—”

“ Come now, Billy,” pleaded the foreman, “ this is an opportunity—”

“ Billy ! Month ago Stonaker's nigger threw me down the steps.”

“ Give 'm a drink,” said the foreman, and the bar-keeper set out two glasses and a large red bottle. While the foreman's back was turned and the bar-man waited upon another customer, Billy did the honors. He filled both glasses and had emptied one when the foreman, having unearthed a quarter, turned and remarked to the liquor man that he did not drink. The man was in the act of removing the glass when Billy grabbed it, and with a quick crook of his elbow pitched the whiskey down his neck.

“ Now will you go and eat ? ”

§ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT §

“Naw—go t’ work,” said Greene, hitching up his trousers.

Off they went together, but at every saloon (and there are dozens of them in Chicago), the new engineer of the Pacific express insisted upon drinking. By hard coaxing the foreman had succeeded in passing three or four of them when they were met by a couple of strikers.

“Hello Billy,” said one of the men. “Where you goin’?”

“Goin’ t’ take me run out,” said Greene, with another hitch.

“Now you fellows break away,” said the foreman, for the strikers had turned and were walking with the others.

“Reckon you don’t own the side-walk, do you?” said one of the men, and the foreman was silent.

“Didn’t think you’d shake us like this Billy,” began the striker. “We intended to take you into the order to-day an’ end up with a good big blow-out to-night. It’s all

❧ CHAPTER VII ❧

right Billy. You go out on your run and when you get in come round to the Pacific an' we'll square you with the boys."

"An' we'll have a bowl together, eh?" said Billy, for the liquor was beginning to make him happy.

The foreman was white with rage, but he was powerless.

"You bet we will, Billy," said the man who had done the talking.

"Hur—what's this, boss?"

"Come along now," urged the foreman, tugging at Billy's arm.

"Never run by a tank," said Billy, setting the air and coming to a dead stall at the open door of a beer saloon. The silent striker had entered the saloon, the other paused in the door, looked back, nodded and asked: "Have something, Billy, b'fore you go?"

"Will I?" cried Billy, as he twisted from the foreman's grasp.

"Police—here—officer!" cried the fore-

§ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT §

man, and when the copper came he found Billy just swallowing his second straight.

“Here,” said the foreman, excitedly, “I want you to arrest these men.”

“Better get a warrant first,” said one of the strikers coolly. “We simply came in here to have a drink,” he explained to the officer.

“Phat’s th’ row hier, Tony?” asked the policeman.

“Th’ ain’t no row as I can see,” said the bar-keeper, “these gents is ’aving a quiet drink w’en ’ees nibs there pips in an’ calls fer a cop.”

“This is one of our engineers,” explained the foreman, “and I was on the way to the station with him when these strikers took him away.”

“Begad, he’s a bute,” said the officer, folding his arms over his ample stomach and gazing with mirthful curiosity at the bum.

“Now, ye’s fellies must not interfere with men as wants to make an honest living—

§ CHAPTER VII §

let th' ingineer go t' 'is ingine," and he gave Billy a shove that sent him into the arms of the waiting foreman.

"What's it *to* you," shouted the angry engine-driver, "who wants to work—who said I wanted t' make a' honest livin'?—Go t' 'ell," and he struck the foreman in the face.

"Here! Here!!" cried the officer, seizing the fighter, "you'll go to work or go to jail," and Billy went away between the copper and the foreman with his wheels sliding.

After much coaxing and cursing by the foreman, who was often asked to come out in the alley and settle it, Billy was loaded into an engine cab. While the foreman was selecting a fireman from the hard-looking herd of applicants sent down from the office of the master-mechanic, the gentle warmth of the boiler-head put Billy to sleep. It was a sound, and apparently dreamless sleep, from which he did not wake the while they rolled him from the engine, loaded him into

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

a hurry-up wagon and carried him away to the cooler.

When he had sobered up Greene went to the round-house and offered his services to the company, but the foreman would not talk to him. Finally Greene became abusive, and the foreman kicked him out of the round-house and across the turntable. From that day Greene was a striker, and a very troublesome one.

CHAPTER EIGHTH

Two weeks had passed when the Philosopher met Patsy, now in deep disgrace. Patsy had been expelled from the Brotherhood for aiding a scab. "O! it's nothing," said Patsy.

"That's right. It won't be worth much to belong to the Union when this cruel war is over."

"Only a fellow hates to get the worst of it when he really tries to tote fair."

"The best you can get is the worst of it when you are bound by oath to an organization that is engaged in a hopeless fight. The president offered yesterday to take back seventy-five per cent. of the men, and immediately they said he was running. This morning the offer is for sixty per cent., but they won't have it. Have they offered to balm you with promotion?"

"Yes."

"Varnished cars, eh?"

"Yep—finest train on the road."

§ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT §

“And you told them?—”

“No.”

“Well, I think you did right. Shall we go and peck?”

“Have you been working?”

“No. I’ve been vag’d. When the police got through with me, and returned my pie-card I turned it in for a commutation ticket, and there are still a few feeds to the good on it. The commutation ticket is the proper card for a gentleman in straitened circumstances. You are not obliged to gorge yourself at early morn with a whole twenty-cent breakfast when all you really need is a cup of black coffee and a roll. Besides, when a man is not working he should not eat so much. I frequently edge in with a crowd of other gentlemen and procure a nice warm lunch at one of the beer saloons, omitting the beer. By the way, the free lunch room is a good place for the study of human nature. There you will see the poor working man fish up his last five cents to pay for

❧ CHAPTER VIII ❧

a beer in order to get a hot lunch, and if you look closely, spot a two-by-four-shop-keeper, for instance, as he enters the front door, and keep your eye on him until he goes out again, you will observe that he has n't lost a cent. A little dark man who runs a three-ball in La Salle Street makes a business of this, and of loaning money at fifty per cent. and seems to be doing quite well."

When they had reached a "Kohlsaats" the two men sat down, or up, and when they had finished Patsy paid for the meal.

"If you see a man who has wood to saw or a piano to tune or anything that is n't scabbin' I wish you'd give me a character and get me the job," said the Philosopher when they had reached the sidewalk.

"You follow my smoke," said Patsy, after a moment's meditation, and he strolled down the crowded street, turning and twisting through the multitude like a man trying to lose a dog, but he could n't lose the Phi-

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

losopher. Presently he stepped in front of a big building, waited for his companion, and they went in together.

“Mr. Stonaker,” said Patsy when he had been admitted to the general manager’s private office, “I have a favor to ask. I want you to give a friend of mine a job. He’s a switchman, and a good trainman, but he will not take the place of a striker.”

“Can you vouch for his honesty, Patsy?” asked the official.

“I think I can.”

“Very well, we want a reliable watchman here in the building; bring your friend in.”

When the Philosopher had been informed as to his new duties, and learned that he was to have charge of the entire building, he asked if Patsy had given his history.

“I have vouched for you,” said Patsy, a little embarrassed.

The general manager pressed a button and when the stenographer came in instructed him to take the man’s personal record, in

❧ CHAPTER VIII ❧

accordance with a well-known rule. This information is intended chiefly as a guide to the management in notifying the relatives or friends of an employee in case of accident or death. The manager did the questioning and when the man had given his name and declared that he had no relatives, no home, no friends — except Patsy — the official showed some surprise and asked :

“Where did you work last?”

“In the workhouse.”

“When?” queried the general manager, casting a quick glance at Patsy, who was growing nervous.

“‘Bout a year ago now.”

“At what particular place have you lived or lodged since that time?”

“In jail.”

“What were you in jail for?”

“Stealing a meal-ticket, this coat and cap from Patsy.”

“I gave the things to him, sir,” said Patsy, “and he was discharged.”

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“Where have you been living since you left the workhouse?”

“In the streets and in the fields.”

“Do you drink?”

“No, sir.”

“Do you mean to tell me that an experienced yardman, strong and intelligent as you appear to be, can sink so low without being a drunkard?”

“Yes, sir.”

“And you have been foreman in the Buffalo yards? What else have you been?”

“A Union man, tramp, bum, vag, thief, and a scab.”

“Huh!” said the general manager, pushing out his lips, “is this your notion of a reliable man, Patsy?”

“Yes, sir, I still vouch for him.”

The general manager looked puzzled. “But you could hardly expect me to employ, in a responsible position, a self-confessed criminal?”

“And yet,” said the Philosopher, “if I had

❧ CHAPTER VIII ❧

lied to you I might have gained a good place, but having told the truth I suppose I must go."

The general manager, who had left his seat, began to pace the floor.

"It may be possible for an honest man to be a tramp—even a vag, but why did you steal?"

"For the same reason that I took the place of a striker the other day—because I was hungry," said the Philosopher looking the general manager full in the face.

"But what brought you to this condition? that's what I want to know," said the official earnestly. "And if you can explain that, you can have the place, provided you really want to reform."

"I'm not so anxious to reform," said the Philosopher. "What I want is a show to earn an honest living, and let the balance of the world reform. But if you want to know what brought me to my present condition I can tell you—this is the instru-

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

ment.” And the man lifted from the manager’s desk a slip of paper, full of names, across the top of which was printed “Black List.”

“It’s the blight of the black-list that is upon me, sir, and it gives me pleasure to be able to present to you a sample of the class of citizens you and your associates are turning out,” said the Philosopher with much feeling, and he turned to go.

“Stay,” said Patsy. “Mr. Stonaker, you told me yesterday that if I ever needed your assistance in any way to make my wants known.”

“And do you still vouch for this man?”

“I do.”

“Very well, then — he can have the place!”

CHAPTER NINTH

MR. HAWKINS had been in his new lodgings nearly a week and had frequently discussed the strike with the great labor leader, when he made bold one evening to state that he had no use for the Brotherhood and that he had it from inside sources that a number of the old engineers were going to return to work, and that the strike would soon be a thing of the past, as would the comfortable jobs that the strikers had left. Cowels, of course, was indignant, but he was interested. Mr. Hawkins had expected as much.

“I’m going out firing myself,” he went on, “and I’m promised promotion as soon as I can start and stop. If I had your experience and your ability, generally, I could get the best run on the road with a cinch on a job as M. M. at the first opening. A good man who goes to the company’s rescue now won’t want for anything. If he’s hard up he can get all the money he needs—

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

that is a few hundred at least—advanced to him.”

Cowels listened attentively.

Mr. Hawkins lighted a fresh ten-cent cigar and gave one to his landlord.

“Of course, it’s different with you,” resumed the lodger, “you own your home and have saved your money, perhaps, but a whole lot of the strikers are being pinched and they’re going to weaken. They’ll be cursed a little bit by the Brotherhood, but the public is dead against the strikers—read the Chicago papers to-day.”

“But the papers are owned body and soul by the Burlington,” said Cowels.

“Well, what do you fellows own? That only shows which is the winning side. You take my advice and let go while you’ve got plenty.”

“Plenty?” echoed Cowels. “Do you suppose I’d take a stranger into my home—do you think for a minute that I would sit here and let you talk to me as you have

§ CHAPTER IX §

done if I could help myself? Plenty! I'm a beggar."

Hawkins knew that, but he expressed surprise. When they had smoked in silence for a while the plumber handed an unsealed letter to his landlord and watched his face closely as he read it.

The letter was from one of the Burlington officials and it stated plainly that the bearer was empowered to make terms with the gentleman addressed looking to his return to the service of the company.

Mr. Cowels was very indignant, at first, but finally consented to discuss the matter. Mr. Hawkins was very cool, explaining that it made no difference with him one way or the other. The official happened to be a personal friend of his and had trusted him with this commission. "If you ask my advice," said the plumber, "I should say take whatever they offer and go to work. No man can hold out against such odds for any great length of time; sooner or later you will

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

be as hard up as the rest, your wife will be in need of the actual necessities of life, your children will be crying for food, and how can you answer them if you let this opportunity pass? To-morrow, I am told, is to be the last day of grace, so you might better heel yourself and let the Brotherhood walk the floor for a while. The probabilities are that the strike will simply be declared off, the old employees to be taken back only as their services are required, and as new men. Every day that passes adds to the strength of the company. Labor organizations, like bands of Indians, are ever at each other's throats. When the Knights of Labor struck on the Reading those haughty aristocrats of the working world, the Engineers' Brotherhood, took their places, and now the Knights of Labor engineers are coming here in car-load lots to fill the cabs of the Burlington. If the engineers were offered their old places back to-day they would bolt for the round-house nor cast one longing, lingering look

❧ CHAPTER IX ❧

for their old friends. Finally, when the strike is settled it will be by the engineers. If it is to be declared off, the unconditional surrender of all the forces will be made by them. If the terms of settlement suit them, your followers will take their medicine and look pleasant. Bring the matter nearer home,—to your own experience. You have given your time, neglected your family, and worked unceasingly for the advancement of the cause. Your eloquence, your genius and your influence have held the men in line when they have wavered and would have broken, and what has your own order done for you, and what will it do at the coming convention? They have guyed you in public and they will throw you down hard when the time comes. It's nothing to me, only I hate to see a good man turned down. I dislike to see real talent and personal worth wasted upon a lot of loud-mouthed, uneducated coyotes who don't know who Shakespeare is. You're too big a man,

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Cowels, that's the trouble; you're out of your sphere. When you are master-mechanic, with your hands full of promotions, they will look up to you, and it is all within easy reach. If you will report for duty to-morrow morning you can go out on Blackwings to-morrow night, with the Denver Limited, the finest train in the West, behind you. The best run on the road will be the meanest position you will ever be asked to fill. But I must say no more, for I don't want to persuade you to take a step which you might regret in after years. I only ask you to think it over to-night and choose between what you call loyalty to the Brotherhood, and your plain duty to your family—Good-night."

Hawkins possessed, in a remarkable degree, the rare faculty of knowing how and when to let go.

When Cowels had made the foregoing facts known to his wife, she was greatly surprised that he would entertain such a proposition

❧ CHAPTER IX ❧

for the smallest fraction of a second, for she had always regarded him as the soul of honor, and wholly unselfish. Now each pondered in silence over the proposition. From her point of view it was a choice between the Brotherhood and her home. Between temporary disgrace for her husband, and hunger for her children, and she was not long in making up her mind. The baby had been without milk that day. It had gone to bed hungry for the first time in its life, and the thought of it made her desperate.

To Cowels's way of reasoning it was simply a question of choice between the position of master of the Brotherhood and master-mechanic. Which was nearest, and which would last longest and pay best? These were the points he was considering, and he chose what appeared to him to be the surest and quickest way. To be sure, he suffered not a little at the thought of deserting his comrades, but his personal ambition and selfishness helped him to determine to report on

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

the following morning, and to go out with the fast express behind him on the following night. He tried not to think of the Brotherhood, and to fashion to himself the glory of success, of fast runs with Blackwings, and future promotion.

CHAPTER TENTH

THE night winds moaned among the empty freight cars. The arc lamps hummed and sputtered, making the flying frost look like diamond dust dropping from the grinding stars. Out of a shadowy alley a bent man crept, crouching under the snow-hung eaves. Far down the track, at a crossing, the man saw the flash of a helmet and the glint of brass buttons, and dodged among the cars. The man had committed no crime against the law, but he was willing to, and so avoided the silent guardian of the peace, pacing his beat. Beyond the track he came to the street door of a two-story building, struck a match, read the number on the transom, and entered the hall. At the top of the first flight of stairs a door stood open. Beneath a gas jet in the open room Dan Moran sat reading a book. He had heard the unsteady footsteps on the stair, but had not allowed them to disturb him. Now the prowler paused, steadied himself against

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

the door-jamb, coughed, hiccoughed, hello'd in a whisper, and Moran looked up.

"Well, Greene," said Dan, "what brings you abroad on a night like this?"

"Business!" was the half-whispered reply, "Business, ol' man."

Now the rum-crazed rambler left the door, put a trembling hand on the table in the centre of the room, glanced back toward the stairs, and peered into the face of the old engineer. "We are betrayed!" he whispered, leaning heavily upon the stand. His wrist shook violently, causing the table to quiver. The smoking outfit upon the table made a low, rumbling noise. "What's that?" he asked, glaring about.

Having satisfied himself that all was right he put both hands upon the table, and gazing again into the face of Moran, repeated: "We are betrayed. Cowels is goin' out with Blackwings on the Denver Limited to-morrow night. The plumber told the foreman an hour ago—I heard 'im. Least

❧ CHAPTER X ❧

they think he's goin', but he ain't. He's goin' to —"

"Oh, Greene, you're drunk. Go home and have a good sleep."

"Home! Did you say home? I ain't got no home. Drunk? Yes, I been drunk lots o' times, but I ain't drunk now. Honest, I ain't teched a drop to-day. Got a bot about you, ol' man? Say, if you have, fur th' love o' life gimme a drop — half a drop — Dan, I'm all afire inside."

It was an awful picture that Moran looked upon now. The bloated face, the sunken, blood-shot eyes, the blazing, hideous nose, burning in the iron-gray stubble, all topped by a shock of tousled, unkempt hair, made a picture horrible in the extreme.

"Say!" Greene began again, glancing toward the door, "meet me at seven thirty to-morrow night, on the 'rep' track near the round-house, an' I'll show you a trick."

"What sort of trick will you show me?"

With another look over his shoulder at the

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

door the drunkard leaned over the table and whispered. When the old engineer had gathered what the man had said he got to his feet, took his midnight caller by the collar and lead him to the top of the stairs. Greene was opposed to leaving the cheerful room, so Moran was obliged to go with him to the street door. Having put the wreck out into the frosty night the engineer went back to his book. But he could not read. That awful face into which he had looked, and the black soul that he had seen as well, haunted him. He sat with his feet upon the table and smoked pipe after pipe, in a vain effort to drive the frightful picture from his mind. The news that Greene had brought disturbed him also. His fireman was going to desert the Brotherhood, and take their old engine out.

Blackwings! How he loved that locomotive, and how absurd it seemed now for a man to become so attached to a mere machine! But she was not inanimate. She lived, moved,

❧ CHAPTER X ❧

breathed. How often, as they swept beneath the stars of an autumn night, had he felt her hot breath upon his face, heard the steel singing beneath her feet and felt her tremble, responsive to his lightest touch. How wild and free and glad she had seemed, let loose in the moonlight with the Limited behind her. How gracefully, easily, she lifted the huge, vestibuled train from swale to swell. How she always passed station after station on the tick of the clock, keeping to the time-card, unvarying as the sun. Proud and queenly, yet gentle, she always answered the signals of the less fortunate locomotives that stood panting on the side tracks, with their heavy loads. Even the Meteor, the engine that wore white flags and pulled the president's private car, always took the siding and saluted Blackwings as she swept by majestically with the Limited.

More than once Moran had refused promotion that would take him from his engine

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

— from the open fields and free, wide world in which they lived and moved together — to the cares and anxieties of a stuffy office. He had been contented and happy with Blackwings, his books and his briar-root pipe. He did not share the troubles of his less fortunate brothers, who hugged and exaggerated their grievances until they became, to them, unbearable. But when they quit he climbed down, took off his overclothes, folded them carefully and carried them away with him. He had nothing to gain by the strike, but he had much to lose by remaining at his post — the confidence and respect of his fellow-toilers. Besides he, in common with the rest, regarded the classification of engineers as unfair to the men and to the travelling public. If a man were competent to handle a passenger train, said the strikers, he ought to have first-class pay. If he were incompetent he ought to be taken off, for thousands of lives were in the hands of the engineer during the three years

§ CHAPTER X §

through which, at reduced pay, he was becoming competent. These were the arguments advanced by the men. This business upon the one hand, and a deep longing upon the part of the management to learn just how far the men could go in the way of dictating to the officials, in fixing the load for a locomotive, and the pay of employees, caused the company, after years of sparing, to undertake the chastisement of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers.*

It is to be presumed that the generals, colonels and captains in the two armies fought for what they considered right. At all events they were loyal and obedient to their superiors. But each had found a foe vastly more formidable than had been ex-

* *The Burlington officials claim that, by resolutions in the lodge room at Lincoln, the engineers fixed the load for certain classes of engines, together with the penalty for pulling more. They argue that if allowed to do this the men would want to make the time-cards and fix freight rates. They certainly had as much right to do the one as the other.*

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

pected. They had not dreamed that the fight could become so bitter. Life-long friends became enemies. Family ties were severed, homes were ruined, men's lives were wrecked, women's hearts were broken, and out of the shadow of the awful strife came men fit for murder. It was these things that had kept Dan Moran awake far into the morning.

Presently he heard a whistle, opened his eyes, looked at his watch and then undressed and went to bed, while other workmen, more happily situated, passed under his window on the way to work.

CHAPTER ELEVENTH

“**B**RUSH the snow off the headlight!”

“What?”

“Brush the snow off the headlight!”

It was the first time the engineer had spoken to the fireman since they left Chicago. When they crossed the last switch and left the lights of the city behind them he had settled down in his place, his eyes, with a sort of dazed look in them, fixed upon the front window. The snow was driving from the north-west so hard that it was impossible for the engineer, even when running slowly through the country towns, to put his head outside the cab, and now they were falling out into the night at the rate of a mile a minute.

It was Barney Guerin's first trip as a fireman. He was almost exhausted by the honest effort he had been making to keep the engine hot, and now he looked at the engineer in mingled surprise and horror. He could not believe that the man expected him to go

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

out over the wet and slippery running-board to the pilot and wipe the snow from the headlight glass. He stood and stared so long that the fire burned low and the pointer on the steam gauge went back five pounds. For the next two or three minutes he busied himself at the furnace door, and when he finally straightened up, half-blinded by the awful glare of the fire-box, half-dazed by being thrown and beaten against the sides of the coal tank, the engineer said:

“Brush the snow off the *headlight*!”

The fireman opened the narrow door in front of him and the storm came in so furiously that he involuntarily closed it again. Again he tried and again was beaten back by the wind. Pulling his cap tight down he faced about and stepped out with his back to the storm. Holding to the hand railing he worked his way to the front end. One sweep of his gloved hand swept the snow away and the great glare of the headlight flashed up the track.

❧ CHAPTER XI ❧

“My God! how she rolls!” exclaimed the engineer.

And she did roll.

Never before in the history of the road had the Denver Limited been entrusted to a green crew, for the engineer was also making his maiden trip. The day coach was almost empty. In the chair car, with four chairs turned together, the newly-made conductor, the head brakeman, a country editor, and the detective sent out to spot the crew, played high five. The three or four passengers in the sleeper were not asleep. They were sitting silently at the curtained windows and occasionally casting anxious glances at the Pullman conductor who seemed to be expecting something to happen. Where were all the people who used to travel by this splendid train? The road was now considered, by most people, as unsafe and the people were going round it. Public opinion, at the beginning of the strike, was about equally divided between

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

the men and the company. Now and then a reckless striker or sympathizer would blow up a building, dope a locomotive or ditch a train, and the stock of the strikers would go down in the estimation of the public. Burlington stock was falling rapidly—the property was being wrecked.

On nearly every side track could be seen two or three dead engines that had been ruined and abandoned by amateur engine-drivers, and now and then at way-stations the smouldering ruins of a freight train, whose blackened skeleton still clung to the warped and twisted track. At every station great crowds of people blocked the platforms, for the Limited had not been able to leave Chicago for more than a month. The engineer had scarcely touched the whistle, deeming it safer to slip quietly through the night, and the light train was now speeding noiselessly over the snow-muffled earth. They had left Chicago two hours late, and as they had a clear track, so far as other

❧ CHAPTER XI ❧

trains were concerned, the young driver was letting her go regardless of danger. At any moment they might expect to be blown into eternity, and it was just as safe at seventy miles an hour as at seventeen.

Besides, George Cowels was desperate. For five long years he had fired this run with the same locomotive. He knew all her tricks and whims, her speed and power, and the road was as familiar to him as was his mother's face. He knew where the "old man" used to cut her back and ease off on the down grades. He knew that he ought to do the same, but he did not. "Let her roll," he would say to himself; and she did roll, and with every swing the bell sounded a single note, low and mournful, like a church bell tolling for the dead. It seemed to the unhappy engineer that it tolled for him, for that day he had died to all his friends.

Although he had only been out a little over an hour now, he knew that in that hour the

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

story of his desertion had flashed out to every division of the various brotherhoods in the United States, Canada and Mexico, and that a hundred thousand men and women would curse him that night before they slept. He recollected what a vigorous striker he had been in the beginning, how he had shouted, "Put him out" when the grand master had said: "We are fighting a losing fight." He recalled with some bitterness that their leader had looked him straight in the face when he added: "And you who fight hardest here will be first to fall."

Then the face of his ten-year-old boy rose up before him, as it had appeared from the street as he was leaving his home that evening, all bruised and bleeding, with soiled and torn clothes, and he heard the brave child's explanation: "Mamma, I would n't 'ave fit, but Dugan's boy said my papa was a scab."*

** The reader must pardon the use of this vulgar word, for we must use it here or spoil this story.*

❧ CHAPTER XI ❧

Ordinarily it would require a great deal of "sand" to enable a man to take out a train of this kind and run at such a high rate of speed through a country full of anarchy, but in Cowels's case it required nothing in the way of bravery. The great sacrifice he had made in abandoning all that he held to be honorable,—the breaking of his vow, the violation of his oath, had left him utterly indifferent to personal danger.

It will be difficult for those unacquainted with the vast army of daily toilers to appreciate the sufferings of this youthful engine-driver. A king, who in a night's debauch loses an empire, loses no more than the man who abandons all that he holds sacred. The struggles and disappointments of the poor mean as much to them as similar sorrows mean to the rich. The heart of a Bohemian milkmaid beats as wildly, aches as sorely and breaks as surely as does the heart of the proudest princess. This man and his wife, on the day they

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

abandoned the cause of his comrades—of the Brotherhood of which he had been so proud, of whose strength he had boasted in many a crowded hall—made a great sacrifice. To stand disgraced in their little world was to be disgraced before all the people of all the earth, for in that world were the only people they knew and cared about.

When the fireman returned to the cab he was almost overcome with terror. More than once, as he worked his way along the side of the rolling, plunging engine, he had nearly been dashed to death. The very machine, he fancied, was striving to shake him from her. Once he had lost his footing on the running board and only saved himself by clinging to the hand rail while the rolling steed beat and thrashed him against her iron side.

“Never ask me to do that again,” he shouted, as he shook his clenched fist at the engineer. The latter laughed, then asked :

“Why ?”

❧ CHAPTER XI ❧

“Because it is dangerous; I nearly lost my life.”

“And what if you had?” said the engineer, and he laughed again. “Why, don’t you know that thousands would rejoice at the news of your death and scarcely a man would mourn? Don’t you know that at thousands of supper-tables to-night, working men who could afford to buy an evening paper read your name and cursed you before their wives and children? Nearly lost your life! Poor, miserable, contemptible scab.”

“Never apply that name to me again!” shouted Guerin, and this time it was not his fist but the coal-pick he shoved up into the very face of the engineer.

“Why?”

“Because it is dangerous; you nearly lost *your* life.”

The engineer made no reply.

“And what if you had?” the fireman went on, for it was his turn to talk now.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“If my action makes me contemptible in the eyes of men, how much more contemptible must yours make you? I take the place of a stranger—you the place of a friend; a man who has educated you, who has taught you all you know about this machine. Right well I know how I shall be hated by the dynamiters who are blowing up bridges and burning cars, and I tell you now that it does not grieve me. Can you say as much? Here’s a copy of the message that went out to your miserable little world to-night—read it, it will do you good. I fancy your friends will be too busy cursing you this evening to devote any time to mere strangers.”

Cowels took the message with a jerk, turned the gauge lamp to his corner and read:

THE Denver Limited left to-night, two hours late, Fireman George Cowels as engineer, and Time-keeper Guerin as fireman. Cowels is the man who wanted the grand

❧ CHAPTER XI ❧

master thrown out of a hall in Chicago. He was a great labor agitator and his desertion is a great surprise.

HOGAN.

Later — It is now understood that Cowels, the scab who went out on engine Blackwings to-night, was bought outright by a Burlington detective. This fact makes his action all the more contemptible. He is now being burned in effigy on the lake front, and the police are busy trying to keep an infuriated mob from raiding and burning his house. The action of Guerin was no surprise, as he was employed in the office of the master-mechanic, and has always been regarded as a company man — almost as an official.

HOGAN.

Guerin, having put in a fresh fire, stood watching the face of his companion, and when the engineer crumpled the message in his hand and ground his teeth together the fireman shoved another message under the nose of the unhappy man. This message was on the same subject, but from quite

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

another source, and varied slightly from those we have just read.

OFFICIAL BULLETIN : *Burlington Route*
THE Denver Limited went out on time to-night with a reasonably well-filled train, Engineer Cowels in the cab. Mr. Cowels has been many years in the service of the company and is highly esteemed by the officials. Although he was, for a time, a prominent striker, he saw the folly of further resistance on the part of the employees, and this morning came to the company's office and begged to be allowed to return to his old run, which request was granted. Cowels is a thoroughly competent engineer and has been on this same run for five years, and up to the time of the strike had never missed a trip. It is expected that his return to his engine will be the signal for a general stampede. The company has generously agreed to reinstate all old employees (unless guilty of some lawless act) who return before noon to-morrow.

STONAKER.

❧ CHAPTER XI ❧

It would be difficult to say which of these dispatches distressed him most. The first said he had sold himself for so much money, the second that he had gone to the company and begged to be reinstated. Slowly he opened the first crumpled message and read down to the word "scab." "George Cowels, the scab, — burned in effigy — a great mob about his house." All these things passed swiftly before him, and the thought of his wife and baby being in actual danger, his boy being kicked and cuffed about, almost made him mad. He crushed the crumpled messages in his right hand while with his left he pulled the throttle wide open. The powerful Blackwings, built to make time with ten cars loaded, leaped forward like a frightened deer. The speed of the train was now terrific, and the stations, miles apart, brushed by them like telegraph poles. At Mendota a crowd of men hurled sticks and stones at the flying train. As the stones hailed into the cab, and the broken

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

glass rained over him, the desperate driver never so much as glanced to either side, but held his place, his hand on the throttle and his eye on the track. For the first time he looked at his watch. He was still more than an hour late. He remembered how the old engineer had said, an hundred times perhaps: "George, an express train should never be late; she should be on time or in the ditch."

It was the first time Blackwings had ever been an hour late anywhere, and with all his greater sorrows this grieved the young engineer. Now at the way stations the crowd that awaited them invariably fell back as the wild train dashed by, or, if they hurled their missiles, those aimed at the locomotive struck the sleeper or flew across the track behind it, so great was the speed of the train. Cowels yielded at last to the irresistible desire to see how his companion was taking it, but as he bent his gaze in that direction it encountered the grinning face

❧ CHAPTER XI ❧

of the fireman, into which he threw the crumpled paper. Then, as he continued to grin, the infuriated engineer grabbed a hard-hammer and hurled it murderously at Guerin's head. The latter saved his life by a clever dodge, and springing to the driver's side caught him by the back of the neck and shoved his head out at the window and held it there. They were just at that moment descending a long grade down which the most daring driver always ran with a closed throttle. Blackwings was wide open, and now she appeared to be simply rolling and falling through space. Although we have no way of knowing how fast she fell, it is safe to say she was making ninety miles an hour. While the fireman held on to the engineer, squeezing and shaking away at the back of his neck, the speed of the train was increasing with every turn of the wheels. Gradually the resistance of the engineer grew feebler until all at once he dropped across the arm-rest, limp and lifeless. Guerin,

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

finding himself alone on the flying engine, had presence of mind enough to close the throttle, but with that his knowledge of the locomotive ended. He reasoned that in time she must run down and stop of herself, and then the train crew would come forward and relieve his embarrassment. It never occurred to him for a moment that he might be regarded as a murderer, for he had only held the engineer down to the seat, with no more violence than boys use toward each other in play. And while he stood staring at the still form of the driver that hung out of the window like a pair of wet overalls, the engine rolled, the snow drifted deeper and deeper on the headlight, and with every roll the bell tolled ! tolled !! like a church bell tolling for the dead. The train, slowing down, rolled silently over the shrouded earth, the fire in the open furnace blackened and died, the cold air chilled her flues and the stream of water from the open injector flooded the boiler of Blackwings and put the death-

❧ CHAPTER XI ❧

rattle in her throat. When at last the train rolled slowly into Galesburg the fireman stood on the deck of a dead locomotive, with snow on her headlight, and, as the crowd surged round him, pointed to the limp form of the young engineer that hung in the window, dead.

CHAPTER TWELFTH

JUDGE MEYER'S court was crowded when the three big policemen, formed like a football team, wedged their way into the building. In the centre of the "A" walked the prisoner, handcuffed and chained like a murderer. When they had arrived in front of the judge and the officers stepped back they left the prisoner exposed to the gaze of the spectators. Standing six feet two, strong and erect, he looked as bold and defiant as a Roman warrior, and at sight of him there ran a murmur through the court room which was promptly silenced by the judge.

In response to the usual questions the prisoner said his name was Dan Moran, that his occupation was that of a locomotive engineer. He had been in the employ of the Burlington for a quarter of a century—ever since he was fifteen years old—but being one of the strikers he was now out of employment.

❧ CHAPTER XII ❧

“You are charged,” said the clerk, “with trespassing upon the property of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy Railroad Company, inciting a riot, attempting to blow up a locomotive and threatening the life of the engineer. How do you plead?”

“Not guilty,” said the old engine-driver, and as he said this he seemed to grow an inch and looked grander than ever.

Being asked if he desired counsel the prisoner said he did not, that the whole matter could be explained by a single witness—an employee of the company.

The company detective and the police officers exchanged glances, the judge coughed, the crowd of loafers shifted ballast and rested on the other foot. Only the prisoner stood motionless and erect.

The detective, the first witness for the prosecution, testified that he had followed the prisoner into the yards from among the freight cars, watched him approach the engine Blackwings and talk with the engineer.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

He could not make out all that passed, but knew that the men had quarrelled. He had seen the prisoner stoop down and fumble about the air-pump on the engineer's side of the engine. He then rose and as he moved off made some threat against the life of the engineer and about "ditching" the train.

Being asked to repeat this important part of his testimony, the witness admitted that he could not repeat the threat exactly, but he was positive that the prisoner had threatened the life of the engineer of the Denver Limited. He was positive that the last words uttered by the prisoner as he left the engine were these: "This train, by this time, ought to be in the ditch." The witness followed the statement with the explanation that the train was then, nearly two hours late. "This," said the witness, still addressing the court, "was found in the prisoner's inside coat pocket," and he held up a murderous looking stick of dynamite. After landing the would-be dynamiter safely

§ CHAPTER XII §

in jail the detective had hastened back to the locomotive, which was then about to start out on her perilous run, and had found a part of the fuse, which had been broken, attached to the air brake apparatus. This he exhibited, also, and showed that the piece of fuse found on the engine fitted the piece still on the dynamite.

It looked like a clear case of intent to kill somebody, and even the prisoner's friends began to believe him guilty. Three other witnesses were called for the prosecution. The company's most trusted detective, and a Watchem man testified that the prisoner had, up to now, borne a good reputation. He had been one of the least noisy of the strikers and had often assisted the police in protecting the company's property. The master-mechanic under whom Dan Moran had worked as a locomotive engineer for twenty years took the stand and said, with something like tears in his voice, that Dan *had been* one of the best men on the road.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Being questioned by the company's attorney he gave it as his opinion that no dynamite was attached to the air-pump of Blackwings when she crossed the table, and that if it was there at all it must have been put there after the engine was coupled on to the Denver Limited. Then he spoiled all this and shocked the prosecuting attorney by expressing the belief that there must be some mistake.

"Do you mean to say that you disbelieve this gentleman, who, at the risk of his life, arrested this ruffian and prevented murder?" the lawyer demanded.

"I mean to say," said the old man slowly, "that I don't believe Dan put the dynamite on the engine."

When the master-mechanic had been excused and was passing out Dan put out his hand—both hands in fact, for they were chained together—and the company's officer shook the manacled hands of the prisoner and hurried on.

§ CHAPTER XII §

When the prosecution had finished, the prisoner was asked to name the witness upon whom he relied.

“George Cowels,” said the accused, and there ran through the audience another murmur, the judge frowned, and the standing committee shifted back to the other foot.

“Your Honor, please,” said the attorney rising, “we are only wasting time with this incorrigible criminal. He must know that George Cowels is dead for he undoubtedly had some hand in the murder, and now to show you that he had not, he has the temerity to stand up here and pretend to know nothing whatever about the death of the engineer. I must say that, quiet and gentle as he is, he is a cunning villain to try to throw dust in the eyes of the people by pretending to be ignorant of Cowels’s death. I submit, your Honor, there is no use in wasting time with this man, and we ask that he be held without bail, to await the action of the grand jury.”

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Dan Moran appeared to pay little or no attention to what the lawyer was saying, for the news of Cowels's death had been a great shock to him. The fact that he had been locked up over night and then brought from the jail to the court in a closed van might have accounted for his ignorance of Cowels's death, but no one appeared to think of that. But now, finding himself at the open door of a prison, with a strong chain of circumstantial evidence wound about him, he began to show some interest in what was going on.

The judge, having adjusted his glasses, and opened and closed a few books that lay on his desk, was about to pronounce sentence when the prisoner asked to be allowed to make a statement.

This the attorney for the company objected to as a waste of time, for he was satisfied of the prisoner's guilt, but the judge over-ruled the objection and the prisoner testified.

He admitted having had the dynamite in

❧ CHAPTER XII ❧

his pocket when arrested, but said he had taken it from the engine to prevent its exploding and wrecking the locomotive. He said he had quarrelled with the engineer of Blackwings at first, but later they came to an understanding. He then gave the young runner some fatherly advice, and started to leave when he was arrested.

Although he told his story in a straightforward honest way, it was, upon the face of it, so inconsistent that even the loafers, changing feet again, pitied the prisoner and many of them actually left the room before the judge could pronounce sentence. Moran was held, of course, and sent to jail without bail. He had hosts of friends, but somehow they all appeared to be busy that evening and only a few called to see him. One man, not of the Brotherhood, said to himself that night as he went to his comfortable bed: "I will not forsake the company, neither will I forsake Dan Moran until he has been proven guilty."

CHAPTER THIRTEENTH

WHILE Dan Moran was being examined in Judge Meyer's ill-smelling court in Chicago a coroner's jury was sitting on the body of the dead engineer at Galesburg. Hundreds of people had been at the station and witnessed the arrival of the express train that came in with a dead engine, with snow on her headlight, and a dead engineer hanging out of the window. Hundreds of people could testify that this had happened, but none of them knew what had caused the death of the engine-driver. Medical experts who were called in to view the body could find no marks of violence upon it and, in order to get out of a close place without embarrassment, agreed that the engineer had died of heart failure. This information, having been absorbed by the jury, they gave in a verdict to that effect. If the doctors had said, "He died for want of breath," the verdict would no doubt have agreed perfectly with what the doctors said.

❧ CHAPTER XIII ❧

After the train had arrived and the coroner was called and had taken the dead man from the engine, Barney Guerin had wandered into a small hotel near the station and engaged a room for the night. Being the only person on the engine at the time of the engineer's death, Guerin was very naturally attracting the attention of the railway officials, and calling about him, unconsciously, all the amateur detectives and newspaper reporters in the place. Fortunately for him, he was arrested, upon a warrant sworn out by the station agent, and lodged in jail before the reporters got at him. Here he was visited by a local lawyer, for the company, and instructed to say nothing whatever about the death of Cowels.

Upon the announcement of the verdict of the coroner's jury the prisoner was released, and returned to Chicago by the same train that bore the remains of the dead engineer. Guerin, whose heart was as big as his body

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

and as tender as a woman's, hastened to the home of his late companion and begged the grief-sick widow to allow him to be of some service to her. His appearance (she had known him by sight) excited her greatly for she knew he had been arrested as the murderer of her husband.

The news he brought of the verdict of the coroner's jury, which his very presence corroborated, quieted her and she began to ask how it had all happened.

Guerin began cautiously to explain how the engineer had died, still remembering the lawyer's advice, but before he had gone a dozen words the poor woman wept so bitterly that he was obliged to discontinue the sad story.

Then came the corpse, borne by a few faithful friends—some of the Brotherhood and some of the railway company—who met thus on neutral ground and in the awful presence of death forgot their feud. Not an eye was dry while the little company stood

❧ CHAPTER XIII ❧

about as the mother and boy bent over the coffin and poured out their grief, and the little girl, not old enough to understand, but old enough to weep, clung and sobbed at her mother's side.

The next day they came again and carried Cowels away and buried him in the new and thinly settled side of the grave-yard, where the lots were not too high, and where for nearly four years their second son, a baby boy, had slept alone. Another day came and the men who had mixed their tears at the engineer's grave passed one another without a nod of recognition, and, figuratively speaking, stood again to their respective guns.

One man had been greatly missed at the funeral, and the recollection that he had been greatly wronged by the dead man did not excuse him in the eyes of the widow. Dan Moran had been a brother, a father, everything to her husband and now when he was needed most, he came not at all.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Death, she reasoned, should level all differences and he should forgive all and come to her and the children in their distress. At the end of a week this letter came :

County Jail, — 1888.

My dear Mrs. Cowels :

Every day since George's death I have wanted to write you to assure you of my innocence and of my sympathy for you in this the hour of your sorrow. These are dreadful times. Be brave, and believe me

Your friend,

Dan Moran.

This letter, and the information it contained, was as great a surprise to Mrs. Cowels as the news of Cowels's death had been to Moran. She began at the beginning and read it carefully over again, as women always do. She determined to go at once to the jail. She was shrewd enough to say "Yes" when asked if the prisoner were related in any way to her, and was shortly in the presence of the alleged dynamiter. She did not find him walking the floor impa-

❧ CHAPTER XIII ❧

tiently, or lying idly on his back counting the cracks in the wall, but seated upon his narrow bed with a book resting on his cocked-up knees, for, unlike most railway employees, Moran was a great reader.

"I'm glad to see you, Mrs. Cowels," he said in his easy, quiet way, as he arose and took her hand, "but sorry we are compelled to meet under such melancholy circumstances."

At sight of their old friend her woman's heart sent forth a fresh flood of tears, and for some moments they stood thus with heads bowed in silent grief.

"I'm sorry I can't offer you a chair," said the prisoner after she had raised her head and dried her eyes. "This only chair I have is wrecked, but if you don't mind the iron couch —" and then they sat down side by side and began to talk over the sad events of the past week.

"Your presence here is a great surprise," began Moran, "and a great pleasure as

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

well, for it leads me to hope that you believe me innocent.”

“How could I believe you otherwise, for I do not know now of what you are accused, nor did I know, until I received your note, that you were imprisoned.”

“But the papers have been full of—”

“Perhaps,” she said interrupting him, “but I have not looked at a paper since I read of the death of George.”

Here she broke down again and sobbed so that the guard outside the cell turned his back; and the old engineer, growing nervous, a thing unusual for him, decided to scold her.

“You must brace up now, Nora,—Mrs. Cowels, and close your sand valve. You’ve got a heavy load and a bad rail, and you mustn’t waste water in this way.”

“Oh! I shall never be able to do it, Dan, I shall die—I don’t want to live and I shall die.”

“You’ll do nothing of the sort—women

❧ CHAPTER XIII ❧

don't die so easy; thousands of others, not half as brave as you are, have made the same run, hard as it seems, and have come in on time. There are few sorrows that time will not heal. Engine-men are born to die, and their wives to weep over them and live on — you will not die."

"But I — I *shall* die," sobbed the woman. Before he could reply the door opened and an elderly man, plainly, but comfortably dressed, stood before them.

Moran gave his hand to the newcomer in silence and it was taken in silence; then, turning to the veiled figure he said: "Mrs. Cowels, this is our master-mechanic."

When the visitor had taken her hand and assured her of his sympathy, Moran asked them to be seated, and standing before them said:

"Mrs. Cowels has just asked me why I am here, and I was at the point of replying when you came in. Now, with your permission I will tell her, for I am afraid, my

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

friend, that you did not quite understand me that day in court. I am charged with trespassing upon the property of the Chicago, Burlington, and Quincy Railroad Company, inciting a riot (although there was no riot), attempting to blow up Blackwings and threatening to kill George Cowels."

"Oh! how could they say such dreadful things?" said Mrs. Cowels, "and I suppose that you were not even on the company's ground!"

"Oh yes, I was. I went to the engine, and quarrelled with George, just as the detective said I did, but we only quarrelled for a moment because George could not know why I came."

"But you did not threaten to kill George?" said the woman excitedly.

"No."

"Tell me, Dan," said the master-mechanic, "had you that stick of dynamite when the detective arrested you? Tell us truly, for you are talking to friends."

§ CHAPTER XIII §

“There is something about the dynamite that I may not explain, but I will say this to you, my friends, that I went to the engine, not to kill Cowels, but to save his life, and I believe I did save it, for a few hours at least.”

Mrs. Cowels looked at the man, who still kept his seat on the narrow bed, as though she wished him to speak.

“Dan,” he began, “I don’t believe you put that dynamite on the engine; I have said so, and if I don’t prove it I am to be dismissed. That conclusion was reached to-day at a meeting of the directors of the road. I have been accused of sympathy with the strikers, it seems, before, and now, after the statement by the attorney that I used my influence to have you discharged after he had made out a clear case against you, I have been informed by the general manager that I will be expected to prove your innocence or look for another place.

“I have been with the Burlington all my

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

life and don't want to leave them, particularly in this way, but it is on your account, more than on my own, that I have come here to-night to ask you to tell the whole truth about this matter and go from this place a free man."

"To do that I must become an informer, the result of which would be to put another in my place. No, I can't do that; I've nothing to do at present and I might as well remain here."

"And let your old friend here be discharged, if not disgraced?" asked Mrs. Cowels.

"No, that must not be," said Moran, and he was then silent for a moment as if trying to work out a scheme to prevent that disaster to his much-loved superior. "You must let me think it over," he said, presently. "Let me think it over to-night."

"And let the guilty one escape," Mrs. Cowels added.

"Some people seem to think," said Moran,

❧ CHAPTER XIII ❧

with just a faint attempt at a smile, "that the guilty one is quite secure."

"Don't talk nonsense, Dan," she said, "you know I believe you."

"And you, my friend?" he said as he extended his hand to the official.

"You know what I believe," said the visitor; "and now good-night—I shall see you again soon."

"I hope so," said Dan. "It is indeed very good of you to call, and of you, too," he added, as he turned to his fairer visitor. "I shall not forget your kindness to me, and only hope that I may be of some help to you in some way, and do something to show my appreciation of this visit and of your friendship. But," he added, glancing about him, "one can't be of much use to his friends shut up in a hole like this."

"You can do me a great favor, even while in prison," she said.

"Only say what it is and I shall try."

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“Tell us who put the dynamite on Blackwings.”

“I shall try,” he said, “only let me have time to think what is best to do.”

“What is right is what is best to do,” said Mrs. Cowels, holding out her hand—“Good-night.”

“Good-night,” said the prisoner, “come again when you can, both of you.” And the two visitors passed out into the clear, cold night, and when the prisoner had seen them disappear he turned to his little friend, the book.

CHAPTER FOURTEENTH

“MR. SCOUPING of *The London Times* would like to see you for a few minutes,” said the jailor.

“I don’t care to see any newspaper man,” said Moran, closing his book.

“I knew that,” said the jailor, “but this man is a personal friend of mine and in all the world there is not his equal in his chosen profession, and if you will see him just for a few minutes it will be a great favor to me. I feel confident, Dan, that he can be of service to you—to the public at least—will you see him?”

The jailor had been extremely kind to the engineer and when he put the matter as a personal request, Moran assented at once and Mr. Scouping was ushered in. He was a striking figure with a face that was rather remarkable.

“Now, what are you thinking about?” asked the visitor, as Moran held his hand and looked him full in the face.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“Oh!” said the prisoner, motioning the reporter to a chair which the jailor had just brought in, “I was thinking what a waste of physical strength it was for you to spend your time pushing a pencil over a sheet of paper.”

“Are you sure?”

“Quite sure. What were you thinking about?”

“The trial of the robbers who held up the Denver Limited at Thorough-cut some eight or ten years ago. You look like the man who gave one of them a black eye, and knocked him from the engine, branding him so that the detectives could catch him.”

Moran smiled. He had been thinking on precisely the same subject, but, being modest, he did not care to open a discussion of a story of which he was the long-forgotten hero. “It strikes me,” said Moran, “as rather extraordinary that we should both recall the scene at the same time.”

❧ CHAPTER XIV ❧

“Not at all,” said the reporter. “The very fact that one of us thought of it at the moment when our hands and eyes met would cause the other to remember.”

“Perhaps you reported the case for your paper, that we saw each other from day to day during the long trial, and that I remembered your face faintly, as you remembered mine. Wouldn’t that be a better explanation?”

“No,” said the journalist cheerfully. “I must decline to yield to your argument, and stick to my decision. What I want to talk to you about, Mr. Moran, is not your own case, save as it may please you, but about the mysterious death of Engineer Cowels.”

“I know less about that, perhaps, than any man living,” said Moran frankly.

“But you know the fireman’s story?”

“No.”

“Well, he claims that they were running at a maddening rate of speed, that he and

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

the engineer had quarrelled as to their relative positions in the estimation of the public in general, the strikers in particular. Cowels threw a hammer at the fireman, whereupon Guerin, as he claims, caught the man by the left arm and by the back of the neck and shoved his head out of the window. The engineer resisted, but Guerin, who is something of an athlete, held him down and in a few moments the man collapsed."

"How fast were they going?"

"Well, that is a question to be settled by experts. How fast will Blackwings go with four cars empty?"

"Ninety miles an hour."

"How fast would she go, working 'wide open in the first notch,' as you people say, down Zero Hill?"

"She would go in the ditch—she could hardly be expected to hold the rail for more than two minutes."

"But she did hold it."

❧ CHAPTER XIV ❧

“I don’t believe it,” said the old driver; “but if she did, she must have made a hundred miles an hour, and in that case the mystery of Cowels’s death is solved—he was drowned.”

“But his clothes were not wet, and he was still in the window when they reached Galesburg.”

“I do not mean,” said Moran, “that he was drowned in the engine-tank, but in the cab window—in the air.”

“That sounds absurd.”

“Try it,” said the prisoner. “Get aboard of Blackwings, strike the summit at Zero Hill with her lever hooked back and her throttle wide open, let a strong man hold your head out at the window, and if she hangs to the rail your successor will have the rare opportunity of writing you up.”

“Do you mean that seriously?”

“I do. If what you tell me is true, there can be no shade of doubt as to the cause of Cowels’s death.”

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“I believe,” said the reporter, “that you predicted his death, or that the train would go in the ditch, did you not?”

“No.”

“I was not present at the examination, but it occurs to me that the man who claimed to be a detective, and who made the arrest, swore that you had made such a prediction.”

“Perhaps,” said Moran. “The truth is when that fellow was giving his testimony I was ignorant of Cowels’s death, upon whose evidence I hoped to prove that the fellow was lying wilfully, or that he had misunderstood me, and later, I was so shocked and surprised at the news of my old fireman’s death that I forgot to make the proper explanation to the magistrate.”

“Why not make that explanation now? These are trying times and men are not expected to be as guarded in their action as in times of peace.”

“If you hope to learn from me that I had anything to do with Cowels’s death, or with

❧ CHAPTER XIV ❧

the placing of the dynamite upon the locomotive, I am afraid you are wasting your time. Suppose you are an army officer, the possessor of a splendid horse — one that has carried you through hundreds of battles, but has finally been captured by the enemy. You are fighting to regain possession of the animal with the chances of success and failure about equally divided, but you have an opportunity, during the battle, to slay this horse, thereby removing the remotest chance of ever having it for yourself again, to say nothing of the wickedness of the act, — would you do it ? ”

“ I should say not. ”

“ And yet, I venture to say, ” said the prisoner, “ that there is no love for a living thing that is not human, to equal the love of a locomotive engineer for his engine. To say that he would wilfully and maliciously wreck and ruin the splendid steed of steel that had carried him safely through sun and storm is utterly absurd. ”

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“But what was it, Mr. Moran, that you said about the train going in the ditch?”

“I have a little motto of my own,” said the engineer, with his quiet smile, “which makes the delay of an express train inexcusable, and I was repeating it to George, as I had done scores of times before. It is that there are only two places for an express train; she should either be on time or in the ditch. It may have been rather reckless advice to a new runner, but I was feeling a mite reckless myself; but, above all the grief and disappointments (for the disgrace of my fireman’s downfall was in a measure mine) arose the desire that Blackwings should not be disgraced; such is the love of the engineer for his engine.”

The old engineer had shown much feeling, more than was usual for him to display, while talking about his engine, and the reporter was impressed very favorably. “This has been most interesting to me,” said the journalist; “and now I must leave you to

❧ CHAPTER XIV ❧

your book, or to your bed," and then the two men shook hands again and parted.

It was almost midnight when a closed carriage stopped at the general office of the Burlington Company, and the man who had been representing *The London Times* stepped out.

The Philosopher, who was still on duty, touched his cap and led the visitor to the private office of the general manager.

"By Jove, Watchem," said the railway man, advancing to meet his visitor, "I had nearly given you up—what success?"

"Well," said the great detective, removing his heavy coat, "I have had a talk with Moran. Why, I know that fellow; he is the hero of the celebrated Thorough-cut train robbery, and he ought to be wearing a medal instead of irons."

"What! for attempting to blow up an engine?" asked the general manager.

"He never did it," said the dark man posi-

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

tively. "He may know who did do it, but he will not tell, and he ought to be discharged."

"He will never be until he is proved innocent," said the railroad man.

"One of the conditions," began the detective deliberately, "upon which I took charge of this business was that I should have absolute control of all criminal matters and I am going to ask you to instruct the prosecuting attorney's office to bring this man before Judge Meyer to-morrow morning and ask that he be discharged."

"The prosecuting attorney will never consent," said the general manager. "He believes the man guilty."

"And what do I care for his opinion or his prejudice? What does it matter to the average attorney whether he convicts or acquits, so long as his side wins? Before we proceed further with this discussion, I want it distinctly understood that Dan Moran shall be released at once. The only spark of pleasure

❧ CHAPTER XIV ❧

that comes into the life of an honest detective, to relieve the endless monotony of punishing the wicked, is the pleasure of freeing those wrongfully accused. Dan Moran is innocent ; release him and I will be personally responsible for him and will agree to produce him within twenty-four hours at any time when he may be wanted."

The general manager was still inclined to hold his ground, but upon being assured that the Watchem detective agency would throw the whole business over unless the demands of the chief were acceded to, he yielded, and after a brief conference the two men descended, the Philosopher closed the offices and went his way.

CHAPTER FIFTEENTH

SCORES of criminals, deputies and strikers were rounded up for a hearing before Judge Meyer. So great was the crowd of defendants that little room was left for the curious. The first man called was a laborer, a freight handler, whose occupation had gone when the company ceased to handle freight. The charge against him was a peculiar one. His neighbor, a driver for one of the breweries, owned a cow, which, although she gave an abundance of milk at night, had ceased almost entirely to produce at the morning milking. The German continued to feed her and she waxed fat, but there was no improvement, and finally it was decided that the cow should be watched. About four A. M. on the following morning a small man came and leaned a ladder against the high fence between the driver's back-yard, and that of the laborer. Then the small man climbed to the top of the fence, balanced himself carefully, hauled the ladder

❧ CHAPTER XV ❧

up and slid it down in the Dutchman's lot. All this was suspicious, but what the driver wanted was positive proof, so he choked his dog and remained quiet until the man had milked the cow and started for the fence. Now the bull-dog, being freed from his master's grasp, coupled into the climber's caboose and hauled him back down the ladder. It was found upon examination that a rubber hot-water bag, well filled with warm milk, was dangling from a strap that encircled the man's shoulders, shot-pouch fashion.

Upon being charged, the man pleaded guilty. At first, he said, he had only taken enough milk for the baby, who had been without milk for thirty-six hours. The thought of stealing had not entered his mind until near morning of the second night of the baby's fast. They had been up with the starving child all night, and just before day he had gone into the back-yard to get some fuel to build a fire, when he heard his neighbor's cow tramping about

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

in the barn lot, and instantly it occurred to him that there was milk for the baby; that if he could procure only a teacupful, it might save the child's life. He secured a ladder and went over the fence, but being dreadfully afraid he had taken barely enough milk to keep the baby during the day and that night they were obliged to walk the floor again. It was only a little past midnight when he went over the fence for the second time. Upon this occasion he took more milk, so that he was not obliged to return on the following night, but another day brought the same condition of affairs and over the fence he went, and he continued to go every night, and the baby began to thrive as it had not done in all its life.

Finally the food supply began to dwindle, he was idle, and his wife was unable to do hard work; they had other small children who now began to cry for milk, and the father's heart ached for them and he went over the fence one night prepared to bring

❧ CHAPTER XV ❧

all he could get. That day all the children had milk, but it was soon gone and then came the friendly night and the performance at the back fence was repeated.

Emboldened by success the man had come to regard it as a part of his daily or nightly duty to milk his neighbor's cow, but alas! for the wrong-doer there comes a day of reckoning, and it had come at last to the freight handler. The freight agent who was called as a witness testified as to the good character of the man previously, but he was a thief. Put to the test it had been proven that he would steal from his neighbor simply to keep his baby from starving, so he went to the work-house, his family went to the poor-house, and the strike went on.

"If you were to ask who is responsible for this strike," said the philosophic tramp to Patsy, "which has left in its wake only waste, want, misery, and even murder, the strikers would answer 'the company'; the company, 'the strikers'; and if Congress

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

came in a private car to investigate, the men on either side would hide behind one another, like cattle in a storm, and the guilty would escape. The law intends to punish, but the law finds it so hard to locate the real criminals in a great soulless corporation, or in a conglomeration of organizations whose aggregate membership reaches into the hundreds of thousands, that the blind goddess grows weary, groping in the dark, and finally falls asleep with the cry of starving children still ringing in her ears."

Now an officer brought engineer Dan Moran, the alleged dynamiter, into court for a special hearing. He wore no manacles, but stood erect in the awful presence of the judge, unfettered and unafraid.

Mr. Alexander, the lawyer for the strikers, having had a hint from Billy Watchem, the detective, asked that the prisoner be discharged, but the young man who had been sent down from the office of the prosecuting

❧ CHAPTER XV ❧

attorney, being behind the procession, protested vigorously. In the midst of a burning argument, in which the old engineer was unmercifully abused, the youthful attorney was interrupted to receive a message from the general manager of the Burlington route. Pausing only long enough to read the signature, the orator continued to pour his argument into the court until a second messenger arrived with a note from his chief. It was brief and he read it: "Let go; the house is falling in on you"; and he let go. It was a long, hard fall, so he thought he would drop a little at a time. The court was surprised to see the attorney stop short in what he doubtless considered the effort of his life, and ask that the prisoner be released on bail. Now the prosecuting attorney glanced at Mr. Alexander, but that gentleman was looking the other way. "Does that proposition meet with the approval of the eminent counsel on the other side?"

"No," said the other side.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“Then will you take the trouble to make your wishes known to the court?”

“No, you will do that for me,” said the eminent counsel, with a coolness that was exasperating. “It would be unsafe to shut off such a flow of eloquence all at once. Ask the court, please, to discharge the prisoner.”

“Never,” said the young lawyer, growing red to the roots of his perfectly parted hair.

The counsel for the defence reached over the table and flipped the last message toward the lawyer, at the same time advising the young man to read it again. Then the young man coughed, the old lawyer laughed, the judge fidgeted on his bench, but he caught the prayer of the youthful attorney, it was answered, and Dan Moran received his freedom.

“Do you observe how the law operates?” asked the Philosopher, who had been the bearer of the message from the general manager, of Patsy Daly as they were leaving the court.

❧ CHAPTER XV ❧

“I must confess,” said Patsy, “that I am utterly unable to understand these things. Here is a lawyer abusing a man—an honest man at that—unmercifully, and all of a sudden he asks the court to discharge the prisoner. It’s beyond me.”

“But the side play! Didn’t you get on to the message that blackguard received? He had a hunch from the prosecuting attorney who had been hunched by the general manager, who, as I happened to know, was severely, but very successfully hunched by Billy Watchem, to the effect that this man was innocent and must be released. It was the shadow-hand of old ‘Never Sleep,’ that did the business and set an innocent man free, and hereafter, when I cuss a copper I’ll say a little prayer for this man whose good deeds are all done in the dark, and therefore covered up.”

“Thank you,” said Patsy, “I should never have been able to work it out myself.”

“Well, it is not all worked out yet,” said

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

the Philosopher, “and will not be until we come up for a final hearing, in a court that is infallible and unfoolable; and what a lot of surprises are in store for some people. It is not good to judge, and yet I can’t help picturing it all to myself. I see a sleek old sinner, who has gone through this life perfectly satisfied with himself, edging his way in and sidling over where the sheep are. Then in comes this poor devil who went to jail this morning—that was his first trip, but the road is easy when you have been over it once—and he, having been herding all along with the goats, naturally wanders over that way. Then at the last moment I see the Good Shepherd shooing the sleek old buck over where the goats are and bringing the milk-thief back with him, and I see the look of surprise on the old gentleman’s face as he drops down the ‘goat-chute.’”

CHAPTER SIXTEENTH

IN time people grew tired of talking and reading about the strike, and more than one man wished it might end. The strikers wished it too, for hundreds of them were at the point of starvation. The police courts were constantly crowded, and often overflowed and filled the morgue. Misery, disappointment, want, and hunger made men commit crimes the very thought of which would have caused them to shudder a year ago. One day a desolate looking striker was warming his feet in a cheap saloon when a well-dressed stranger came and sat near him and asked the cause of his melancholia. "I'm a striker," said the man; "and I have had no breakfast. More than that, my wife is hungry at home and she is sick, too. She's been sick ever since we buried the baby, three weeks ago. All day yesterday I begged for work, but there was nothing for me to do. To-day I have begged for money to buy medicine and food for her, but I have re-

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

ceived nothing, and now my only hope is that she may be dead when I go home to-night, empty-handed and hungry.”

The stranger drew his chair yet nearer to that of the miserable man and asked in a low tone why he did not steal.

“I don’t know how,” said the striker, looking his questioner in the face. “I have never stolen anything and I should be caught at my first attempt. If not, it would only be a question of time, and if I must become a thief to live we might as well all die and have done with it. It’ll be easier anyway after she’s gone, and that won’t be long; she don’t want to live. Away in the dead of night she wakes me praying for death. And she used to be about the happiest woman in the world, and one of the best, but when a mother sits and sees her baby starve and die, it is apt to harden her heart against the people who have been the cause of it all. I think she has almost ceased to care for me, for of course she blames me

❧ CHAPTER XVI ❧

for going out with the strikers, but how's a man to know what to do? If I could raise the price I think I'd take a couple of doses of poison home with me and put an end to our misery. She'd take it in a holy minute."

"Don't do that," said the stranger, dabbing a silk handkerchief to his eyes, one after the other. "And don't steal, for if you do once you will steal again, and by and by you'll get bolder and do worse. I've heard men tell how they had begun by lifting a dicer in front of a clothing store, or stealing a loaf of bread, and ended by committing murder. They can't break this way always—brace up."

The switchman went over to the bar where a couple of non-union men were shaking dice for the drinks. He recognized one of them as the man who had taken his place in the yards, but he scarcely blamed him now. Perhaps the fellow had been hungry, and the striker knew too well what that

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

meant. Presently, the switchman went back to the stove and began to button his thin coat up about his throat.

"I'm dead broke myself," said the well-dressed stranger, "but I'm going to help you if you'll let me."

As the striker stared at the stranger the man took off a sixty-dollar overcoat and hung it over the switchman's arm. "Take it," he said, "it's bran new; I just got it from the tailor this morning. Go out and sell it and bring the money to me and I'll help you."

When the striker had been gone a quarter of an hour the well-dressed man strolled up to the bar and ordered a cocktail. Fifteen minutes later he took another drink and went out in front of the saloon. It was cold outside and after looking anxiously up and down the street the philanthropist reëntered the beer-shop and warmed himself by the big stove. At the end of an hour he ordered another dose of nerve food

❧ CHAPTER XVI ❧

and sat down to think. It began to dawn upon him that he had been "had," as the English say. Perhaps this fellow was an impostor, a professional crook from New York, and he would sell the overcoat and have riotous pastime upon the proceeds. "The wife and baby story was a rank fake—I'm a marine," said the well-dressed man taking another drink. It seemed to him that the task of helping the needy was a thankless one, and he wished he had the overcoat back again. He had been waiting nearly two hours when the switchman came in. "I had a hard time finding a purchaser," explained the striker, "and finally when I did sell it I could only get twelve dollars and they made me give my name and tell how I came to have such a coat. I suppose they thought I had stolen it and I dare say I looked guilty for it is so embarrassing to try to sell something that really doesn't belong to you, and to feel yourself suspected of having stolen it."

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“And you told them that a gentleman had given the coat to you to sell because he was sorry for you?”

“Yes, I gave them a description of you and told them the place.”

“That was right,” said the gentleman, glancing toward the door. “Here are two dollars; come back here to-morrow and I’ll have something more for you—good-by.” And the philanthropist passed out by a side door which opened on an alley.

The striker gripped the two-dollar bill hard in his hand and started for the front door. All thought of hunger had left him now, and he was thinking only of his starving wife, and wondering what would be best for her to eat. Two or three men in citizens’ dress, accompanied by a policeman, were coming in just as he was going out, but he was looking at the money and did not notice them. “There goes the thief,” said one of the men, and an officer laid a heavy hand on the striker’s shoulder. The man looked

§ CHAPTER XVI §

up into the officer's face with amazement, and asked what the matter was.

"Did you sell an overcoat to this gentleman a little while ago?" asked the policeman.

"Yes," said the striker glancing down at the two dollars he still held in his hand.

"Und yer sthold dot coats fum mine vindo'," said a stout man shoving his fist under the switchman's nose.

"A gentleman gave me the coat in this saloon," urged the striker. "Why, he was here a moment ago."

"Ah! dot's too tin," laughed the tailor, "tak' 'im away, Meester Bleasman, tak' 'im away," and the miserable man was hurried away to prison.

That night while the switchman sat in a dark cell his young wife lay dying of cold and hunger in a fireless room, and when an enterprising detective came to search the house for stolen goods on the following morning, he found her there stiff and cold.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Of course no one was to blame in particular, unless it was the well-dressed gentleman who had "helped" the striker, for no one, in particular, was responsible for the strike. It may have been the company and it may have been the brotherhood, or both, but you can't put a railroad company or a brotherhood in jail.

CHAPTER SEVENTEENTH

MR. WATCHEM's plumber, as might have been expected, had the good taste to leave his modest lodgings after the downfall and death of his landlord, and now the widow was left alone with her two children. She was a gentle soul, who had always been esteemed by her neighbors, but since her husband's desertion to the enemy, she had been shamefully slighted. One would have thought that her present helpless condition would have shielded her from such slights, but it did not.

A few dollars still remained from the last rent money received from the plumber, who always paid in advance, and upon this she lived for a week or more after the death of her husband. She wondered how long it would be before the Benevolent Building Association would sell the house, and then how long before they would put her and the children into the street. Upon visiting the undertaker she was surprised to learn that

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

all the expenses of her husband's funeral had been paid. It must have been done by the company, since, having left the Brotherhood, her husband could have had no claim upon the organization. Well, she was glad it was paid, for the road that led into the future was rough and uncertain.

One evening, when the baby had gone to sleep and the lone widow was striving to entertain little Bennie, and at the same time to hide her tears from him, for he had been asking strange questions about his father's death, the bell rang and two of the neighbors came in. They were striking firemen and she knew them well. One of the men handed her a large envelope with an enormous seal upon it. She opened the letter and found a note addressed to her and read it :

Dear Mrs. Cowels :

Although your husband had deserted us, he had not been expelled, but was still a member in good standing at the moment of his death, and therefore legally en-

❧ CHAPTER XVII ❧

titled to the benefits of the order. For your sake I am glad that it is so, and I take pleasure in handing you a cheque for two thousand dollars, the amount of his insurance, less the amount paid by the local lodge for funeral expenses.

Very truly yours,

EUGENE V. DEBSON,

Grand Secretary and Treasurer.

She thanked them as well as she could and the men tried to say it was all right, but they were awkward and embarrassed and after a few commonplace remarks withdrew.

Mrs. Cowels sat for a long while looking at the cheque, turning it over and reading the figures aloud to Bennie and explaining to him what an enormous amount of money it was. And what a load had thus been lifted from the slender shoulders of this lone woman! Now she could pay off the mortgage and have nearly fourteen hundred dollars left. It seemed to her that that amount ought to keep them almost for a

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

lifetime. This relief, coming so unexpectedly, had made her forget for the moment her great sorrow. She even smiled when telling Bennie how very rich they were, but when the boy looked up, with tears swimming in his big, blue eyes, and said, through the sobs that almost choked him: "But I 'd ruther have papa back again," it pierced her heart and made the old wound bleed anew.

Patsy Daly and his friend, the Philosopher, were at that moment approaching the Cowels's house where they lodged—they were room-mates now. They had seen the two men leaving the house, and having caught sight of the lonely woman and her child, stood looking beneath the window shade upon the pathetic scene. When they saw the official envelope, with the big, red seal, they readily guessed the errand of the men, for they knew the rules and ways of the Brotherhood, and that the dead engineer's family was entitled to the insurance

❧ CHAPTER XVII ❧

upon his life. They saw the little mother smiling upon her boy, saw him turn a tearful face up to hers, and the change that came, and the look of anguish upon the unhappy woman's face touched them deeply. "O God!" said the Philosopher, laying a hand upon the shoulder of his friend, "if it be true that we, who are so wicked, must suffer for our sins, it is pleasant to feel that these martyrs—the millions of mothers whose hearts are torn in this world—will have a pleasant place in the world to come."

CHAPTER EIGHTEENTH

MR. WATCHEM, chief of the famous Watchem detective agency, was pacing his private office. He was a heavy man with heavy features and a heavy, dark mustache, at which he tugged vigorously as he walked. In his left hand he carried a dozen or more sheets of closely written note paper. Presently the door opened, and a small man, slightly stooped, entered and removed his hat.

“Is this your report, sir?” asked the chief. The man said it was.

“And can you substantiate these charges? Mind you, if an innocent man suffers I shall hold you accountable, do you understand?”

“I understand, and I am willing to swear to that statement.”

“Have the men been arrested?”

“They have, and are now on their way to Chicago.”

“They will probably be arraigned to-morrow morning,” observed the great detective.

§ CHAPTER XVIII §

“See that your witnesses are on hand—you may go now.”

When the small man had stolen softly out, down the stair and into the street, the chief detective descended, entered a closed carriage and was driven to his home.

It was now past midnight, and all over the city printers were setting up the story of the arrest of a number of dynamiters on a Burlington train. The wires were singing it across the country, and cables were carrying to the ends of the earth the story of the disgrace and downfall of the Brotherhood.

The headquarters of the strikers were crowded with a host of anxious men, unwilling to believe that their brothers had been guilty of so dastardly a crime.

On the following morning, when the daily press had announced the arrest of the alleged dynamiters, the city was thrown into a fever of excitement, and thousands who had been in sympathy with the men now openly denounced them, and by so doing

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

gave aid and encouragement to the company. The most conservative papers now condemned the strikers, while the editor of *The Chicago Times* dipped his quill still deeper into the gallstand.

Following close upon the heels of the arrest of these strikers came the sensational arrest of Mr. Hogan, director general of the strike, charged with conspiracy. The private secretaries of the strike committee turned out to have been all along in the employ of the Watchem detective agency, but the charges of conspiracy were never pushed. The men who were charged with having and using dynamite, however, were less fortunate. Two were imprisoned, one was fined, the others proved to be detectives, and of course were released.

The effect of all this was very satisfactory to the company, and disheartening to the men.

The daily meetings in the hall in town were less crowded, and the speeches of the most

❧ CHAPTER XVIII ❧

radical and optimistic members of the fraternity failed to create the old-time enthusiasm. The suits worn by the strikers were becoming shiny, and the suffering in hundreds of homes was enough to cause men to forget the commandments. The way cars and cabs of out-going freight trains were crowded with old Burlington men starting out to find work on other roads. They had been losing heart for some time, and now the shame and disgrace caused by the conviction of the dynamiters made them long to be away ; to have a place in the world where they might be allowed to win an honest living, and forget the long struggle of which they had grown weary. Unlike the Philosopher, they were always sure of a ride, but they found that nearly all the roads in the country had all the men they needed to handle their trains. The very fact that a man had once been a Burlington engineer was a sufficient recommendation, and the fact that he had been a striker seems

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

not to have injured him in the estimation of railway officials generally, but the main trouble was that there was no place for him.

While the boycott on Burlington cars had kept all roads, not operating under a receiver, from handling Burlington business, it made it all the easier for the company to handle the little traffic that came to them and gave the road the appearance of running trains. All this was discouraging to the men, and at last, having exhausted all fair means, and some that were unfair, the strike was declared off. While the company refused to the last to accept anything short of unconditional surrender it is pleasing to be able to record here that the moment the men gave in the officials did all they could, consistent with the policy of the company and past events, to lessen the pain of defeat. The following letter, which was sent by the president to the vice-president and general manager, reminds us of the gentleness of

❧ CHAPTER XVIII ❧

Grant, in receiving the surrender of a brave and noble general :

Boston, Jan. 3, 1889.

*To ———, Vice-President C. B. & Q. Railroad,
Chicago.*

The company will not follow up, black-list, or in any manner attempt to proscribe those who were concerned in the strike, but on the contrary, will cheerfully give to all who have not been guilty of violence, or other improper conduct, letters of introduction, showing their record in our service, and will in all proper ways assist them in finding employment.

In making this letter known to the public the general manager said :

“It is important that no question should arise as to the good faith of the company, and it is our desire and intention that there should be no opportunity for such question.”

He even offered to shield, as far as was consistent, those who, in the heat of the fight, had committed unlawful acts. He was a

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

generous conqueror. It was humane, and manly, and noble in him to help those unfortunate ones who were now in so much need of help, and to protect them from the persecution of the few little-souled officials who were loath to stop fighting. It is all the more creditable because he was not bound to do it. He wrote: "While men who have been guilty of improper conduct during the late strike cannot be re-employed, and while we cannot give letters to them, no officer or employee should continue the animosities of the conflict after it is over, or interfere to prevent the employment of such men elsewhere."

CHAPTER NINETEENTH

AT last the agony was over—at least the agony of suspense. The poor misguided men knew now that all hope had died. They would be re-employed when the company needed them, but it was January—the dull-est month in the year. Every railroad in the West was laying men off. Hundreds of the new men were standing in line waiting for business to pick up, and this line must be exhausted before any of the old employees could be taken back. The management considered that the first duty of the company was to the men who had helped to win the strike. There was no disposition on the part of the officials to make it harder for the vanquished army. They admired the loyalty and self-sacrifice, though deploring the judgment of the mismanaged men; but they were only officers in an opposing army, and so fought the fight for the interest they represented, and for the principles in which they believed.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Nothing in the history of the strike shows more conclusively that the men were out-generalled than the manner in which the company handled the press. It is not to be supposed for a moment that the daily papers of Chicago, with possibly one exception, willfully misrepresented the men, but the story of the strikers was never told. Mr. Paul, the accomplished "bureau of information," stood faithfully at the 'phone and saw that the public received no news that would embarrass the company or encourage the men. The cold, tired reporter found a warm welcome and an easy chair in Mr. Paul's private office, and while he smoked a fragrant cigar the stenographer brought in the "news" all neatly type-written and ready for the printer. Mr. Paul was a sunny soul, who, in the presence of the reporter laughed the seemingly happy laugh of the actor-man, and when alone sighed, suffered and swore as other men did. Mr. Paul was a genius. By his careful manipulation of the press the public

§ CHAPTER XIX §

was in time persuaded that the only question was whether the company, who owned the road, should run it, or whether the brotherhoods, who did not own it, should run it for them. Every statement given out by the company was printed and accepted, generally, as the whole thing, while only two papers in all the town pretended to print the reports issued by the strikers. The others cut them and doctored them so that they lost their point. But all is fair in love and war, and this was war—war to the knife and the knife to the hilt—so Mr. Paul should not be hated but admired, even by his foes. He was a brilliant strategist. Many there are who argue to this day that Mr. Paul won the strike for the company, but Mr. Paul says Watchem, the detective, did it. At all events they each earned the deathless hatred of the strikers. But, leaving this question open, the fact remains that the general in command—the now dead hero of that fierce fight—deserves a monument

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

at the expense of American railroads, if, as American railroad managers argue, that war was an holy war.

There had never been a moment when the management feared defeat. They had met and measured the amateur officials who were placed in command of the strikers. They were but children in the hands of the big brainy men who were handling the company's business. They could fire a locomotive, "ride a fly," or make time on the tick of the clock. They could awe a convention of car-hands or thrill an audience at a union meeting, but they had not the experience, or mental equipment to cope with the diplomatic officials who stood for the company. Their heads had been turned by the magnitude of their position. They established themselves at a grand hotel where only high-salaried railroad officials could afford to live. They surrounded themselves with a luxury that would have been counted extravagant by the minister of

❧ CHAPTER XIX ❧

many a foreign land. They dissipated the strength of the Brotherhood and wasted their substance in high living. They had gotten into clothes that did not fit them, and, saddest of all, they did not know it. The good gray chief of the Brotherhood, who was perfectly at home in the office of a president or a general manager, who knew how to meet and talk with a reporter, who was at ease either in overalls or evening dress, was kept in the background. He would sell out to the company, the deep-lunged leaders said. He could not be trusted, and so from the men directly interested in the fight the strikers chose a leader, and he led them to inglorious defeat; though defeat was inevitable.

At last, made desperate by the shadow of coming events, this man, so the officials say, issued a circular advising old employees to return to work and when out on the road to disable and destroy the company's locomotives, abandoning them where they were

wrecked and ruined. The man accused of this crime declared that the circular was a forgery, committed by his secretary, who was a detective. But that the circular went out properly signed and sealed is beyond dispute, and in reply to it there came protests from hundreds of honest engine-drivers all up and down the land. The chief of a local division came to Chicago with a copy of the circular and protested so vigorously that he was expelled from the Brotherhood, to the Brotherhood's disgrace.

Smarting under what he deemed a great wrong, he gave the letter into the hands of the officials, and now whenever he secures a position the road that employs him is forced to let him go again or have a strike. He is an outcast—a vagabond, so far as the union is concerned. Ah, the scars of that conflict are deep in the souls of men. The blight of it has shadowed hundreds of happy homes, and ruined many a useful life.

With this "sal-soda" circular in their pos-

❧ CHAPTER XIX ❧

session the managers caused the arrest of its author, charging him with conspiracy—a serious offense in Illinois.

A sunny-faced man, with big, soulful blue eyes and a blond mustache, had been living on the same floor occupied by the strike committee. He had conceived a great interest in the struggle. For a man of wealth and culture he showed a remarkable sympathy for the strikers, and so won the heart and confidence of the striker-in-chief. It was perfectly natural, then, that in the excitement incidental to the arrest, the accused should rush into the apartments of the sympathetic stranger and thrust into his keeping an armful of letters and papers.

As the officers of the law led the fallen hero away the blond man selected a number of letters and papers from the bundle, abandoned the balance and strolled forth. For weeks, months, he had been planning the capture of some of these letters, and now they had all come to him as suddenly as

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

fame comes to a man who sinks a ship under the enemy's guns.

This blond man was a detective. His victim was a child.

Yes, the great struggle that had caused so much misery and cost so many millions was at an end, but it was worth to labor and capital all it had cost. The lesson has lasted ten years, and will last ten more.

It had been a long, bitter fight in which even the victorious had lost. They had lost at least five million dollars in wrecked and ruined rolling stock, bridges and buildings. The loss in net earnings alone was nearly five millions in the first five months of the strike that lasted nearly a year. It would cost five millions more to put the property in the same excellent condition in which the opening of hostilities had found it. It would cost another five millions to win back the confidence of the travelling and shipping public. Twenty millions would not cover the cost, directly and indirectly, to

❧ CHAPTER XIX ❧

the company, for there were no end of small items—incidentals. To a single detective agency they paid two hundred thousand dollars. And there were others.

It has taken nearly ten years to restore the road to its former condition, and to man the engines as they were manned before the strike. It would have taken much longer had the owners of the property not settled upon the wise policy of promoting men who had been all their lives in the employ of the Burlington road, to fill the places as fast as they became vacant, of men—the heroes of the strike—who were now sought out by other companies for loftier positions. In this way the affairs of the company were constantly in the hands of men who had gone through it all, who could weed out the worthless among the new men, and select the best of those who had left the road at the beginning of the strike. The result is that there is scarcely an official of importance in the employ of the company to-day

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

who has not been with it for a quarter of a century. The man who took the first engine out at the beginning of the strike—taking his life in his hands, as many believed—is now the general manager of the road.

There was something admirable, even heroic, in the action of the owners in standing calmly by while the officials melted down millions of gold. As often as a directors' meeting was called the strikers would take heart. "Surely," they would say, "when they see what it costs to fight us they will surrender." The men seem never to have understood that all this was known to the directors long before the sad news reached the public. And then, when the directors would meet and vote to stand by the president, and the president would approve and endorse all that the general manager had done, the disheartened striker would turn sadly away to break the melancholy news to a sorrowing wife, who was keeping lonely vigil in a cheerless home.

CHAPTER TWENTIETH

DAN MORAN had not applied for re-employment when the strike was off, but chose rather to look for work elsewhere, and he had looked long and faithfully, and found no place. First of all he had gone west, away to the coast, but with no success. Then he swung around the southern route, up the Atlantic coast and home again. Three years,—one year with the strikers,—four years in all of idleness, and he was discouraged. “It’s the curse of the prison,” he used to say to his most intimate friends; “the damp of that dungeon clings to me like a plague. It’s a blight from which I can’t escape. Every one seems to know that I was arrested as a dynamiter, and even my old friends shun me.”

He had been saying something like that to Patsy Daly the very day he returned to Chicago. They were walking down through the yards, for Patsy, who was close to the officials, had insisted upon going personally

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

to the master-mechanic, and interceding for the old engineer who had carried him thousands of miles while the world slept, and the wild storm raged around them. Patsy had been telling the old engineer the news of the road, but was surprised that Moran should seem to know all that had taken place, the changes and promotions, the vast improvements that had been made by the company, and the rapidly growing traffic. Patsy stopped short, and looking his companion in the eye, began to laugh.

“Now what in thunder are you laughing at?” asked Moran.

“At Patsy Daly, the luny,” said the conductor (Patsy had been promoted); “why, of course you know everything. I’ve been rooming at the house, and I remember now that *she* always knew just where you were at all times. Ah! ye sly old rogue—”

“Patsy,” said Moran, seriously, putting up his hand as a signal for silence.

“That’s all right, old man. She deserves a

§ CHAPTER XX §

decent husband, but it'll be something new to her. Say, Dan, a fool has less sense than anybody, an' Patsy Daly's a fool. Here have I been at the point of making love to her myself, and only her tears and that big boy of hers have kept me from it. And all the time I thought she was wastin' water on that blatherskite of a Cowels, but I think better of her now."

"And why should she weep for any one else?" asked the old engineer.

"And why shouldn't she weep for you, Dannie? wandering up and down the earth, homeless and alone. Why I remember now. She would cry in her coffee at the mention of your name. And Dan, she's growin' prettier every day, and she's that gentle and—"

Just then the wild scream of a yard engine close behind them caused them to step aside.

"Wope!" cried a switchman, bang bang went the bell—"Look out there," yelled

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Patsy, for as the two pedestrians looked back they saw a drunken man reel out from among the cars. The driver of the switch-engine saw the man as the engine struck him, and, reversing, came to a quick stop and leaped to the ground.

The man lay with his lower limbs beneath the machine, and a blind driver (those broad wheels that have no flanges) resting on the pit of his stomach, holding him to the rail. The young engineer, having taken in the situation, leaped upon his engine, and was about to back off when Moran signalled him to stand still. "Don't move," said the old engineer, "he may want to say a word before he dies, and if you move that wheel he will be dead."

"Why, hello Greene, old hoss ; is this you ?" asked Moran, lifting the head of the unfortunate man and pushing the unkept hair back from his forehead.

Greene opened his eyes slowly, looked at his questioner, glanced all about and, as

❧ CHAPTER XX ❧

Moran lifted his head, gazed at the great wheel that had almost cut his body into two pieces. He was perfectly sober now, and asked why they didn't back up and look him over.

"We shall presently," said Moran, "only we were afraid we might hurt you. You are not in any pain now, are you?"

"No," said the man, "I don't know when I've felt more comfortable; but for all that I guess I'm clean cut in two, ain't I, Dan?"

"Oh no, not so bad as that."

"Oh yes, I guess there's no use holdin' out on me. Is the foreman here?"

"Yes, here I am, Billy."

"Billy!" said Greene, "now wouldn't that drive you to cigarettes? Billy!—why don't you call me drunken Bill? I'm used to that."

"Well, what is it, old man?" asked the foreman, bending down.

"You know this man? This is Dan Moran, the dynamiter." And the foreman of the

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

round-house, recognizing the old engineer for the first time, held out his hand, partly to show to Moran and others that the strike was off, and partly to please the dying man. "That's right," said Greene to the foreman, "it'll be good for you to touch an honest hand."

By this time a great crowd had gathered about the engine. Some police officers pushed in and ordered the engineer to "back away."

"An' what's it *to* ye?" asked Greene with contempt, for he hated the very buttons of a policeman. "It's no funeral uf yours. Ye won't grudge me a few moments with me friend, will ye? Move on ye tarrier."

The big policeman glanced about and recognizing the foreman asked why the devil he didn't "git th' felly out?"

Now a red-haired woman came to the edge of the crowd, put her bucket and scrubbing brush down, and asked what had happened.

"Drunk man under the engine," said one of

❧ CHAPTER XX ❧

the curious, snappishly. The woman knew that Greene had passed out that way only a few moments ago. She had given him a quarter and he had promised not to come back to her again, and now she put her head down and ploughed through the crowd like a football player.

“Hello Mag,” said Greene, as the woman threw herself upon her knees beside him. “Here’s yer money—I won’t get to spend it,” and he opened his clinched fist and there was the piece of silver that she had given him.

The big policeman now renewed his request to have the man taken out, but the foreman whispered something to him. “Oh! begorry, is that so? All right, all right,” said the officer.

“Am I delayin’ traffic?” asked Greene of the foreman. “It takes a little time to die ye know, but ye only have to do it onct.”

“Have ye’s anythin’ to say?” asked the officer.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“Yes,” said Greene, for his hatred for a policeman stayed with him to the end, “ye can do me a favor.”

“An’ phot is it?”

“Jist keep your nose out of this business, an’ don’t speak to me again till after I’m dead. Do ye mind that, ye big duffer?”

It was the first time in all his life when he could say what was on his mind to a policeman without the dread of being arrested.

“Come closer, Mag—whisper, Dan. Here, you,” said Greene to the foreman, and that official bent down to catch the words which were growing fainter every moment. “I’m goin’ to die. Ye mind the time ye kicked me out at the round-house? Well, ye don’t need to say; I mind, an’ that’s sufficient. I swore to git even with the Burlington for that. I hated George Cowels because he married a woman that was too good fur ’im,—she was too good for me, for that matter. Well, when he went back on the Brotherhood and took his old engineer’s job I went

❧ CHAPTER XX ❧

to this man Moran and offered to blow the engine up, and he put me out of his room. I then put the dynamite on the engine myself an' Moran followed me and took it off, and saved Cowels's life, prevented me from becoming a murderer, and went to jail. Good-by, Mag. Give me your hand Dan, old man. Back up."

The old engineer nodded to the foreman, who signalled the man on the engine, and the great wheel moved from above the body. More than one man turned his back to the machine. The woman fainted. Moran had covered the eyes of the unfortunate man with his hand, and now when he removed it slowly the man's eyes were still closed. He never moved a finger nor uttered a sound. It was as if he had suddenly fallen asleep.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FIRST

THE Denver Limited had backed into the depot shed at Chicago, and was loading when the Philosopher came through the gate. He was going down to Zero Junction where he was serving the company in the capacity of station agent. Patsy Daly was taking the numbers of the cars, and at his elbow walked a poorly-dressed man, and the Philosopher knew in a moment that the man wanted to ride.

The Philosopher, with a cigar in his mouth, strolled up and down catching snatches of the man's talk. In a little while he had gathered that the anxious stranger's wife lay dying in Cheyenne, and that he had been tramping up and down the land for six months looking for work. If Patsy could give him a lift to Omaha he could work his way over the U. P. where he knew some of the trainmen, having worked on the Kansas Pacific out of Denver in the early days of the road. His story was so lifelike and

❧ CHAPTER XXI ❧

pathetic that Patsy was beginning to look troubled. If he could help a fellow-creature up the long, hard hill of life—three or four hundred miles in a single night—without straining the capacity of the engine, he felt that he ought to do it.

Patsy had gone to the head end (the stranger standing respectfully apart) to ask the engineer to slow down at the Junction, and let the agent off. He hoped the man might go away and try a freight train, but as the conductor turned back the unfortunate traveller joined him.

Now the eyes of Patsy fell upon the face of the Philosopher, and a brilliant thought flashed through his mind. He marvelled, afterwards, that he had not thought of it sooner.

“Here, old man,” said Patsy, “take this fellow’s testimony, try his case, and let me have your opinion in nine minutes—it’s just ten minutes to leaving time.”

Now it was the Philosopher to whom the

§ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT §

prospective widower rehearsed his tale of woe.

There was not much time, so the station agent at Zero began by offering the man a cigar, which was accepted. In the midst of his sorrowful story the man paused to observe a handsome woman, who was at that moment lifting her dainty, silken skirts to step into the sleeper. The Philosopher had his eyes fastened to the face of the man, and he thought he saw the man's mustache quiver as though it had been agitated by the passing of a smothered smile.

"Well," the man was saying, "we had been married only a year when I lost my place and started out to look for work."

By this time he had taken a small pocket knife from his somewhat ragged vest, clipped the end off the cigar neatly, put the cut end between his teeth, and the knife back into his pocket. Without pausing in his narrative (he knew he had but nine minutes) he held out a hand for a match. The Philosopher

❧ CHAPTER XXI ❧

pretended not to notice the movement, which was graceful and perfectly natural. As they turned, up near the engine, the sorrowful man went into his vest again and brought up a small, silver match-box which he held carefully in his closed fist, but which snapped sharply, as the knife had done when he closed it.

“Excuse me,” said the Philosopher, reaching for the match-box, “I’ve lost my fire.”

The melancholy man made a move towards his vest, paused, changed his mind, and passed over his lighted cigar.

“Go on,” said the examining judge, when he had got his cigar going again.

Now at each turn the Philosopher quickened his pace, and the man, eager to finish his sad story, walked beside him with a graceful, springy walk. The man’s story was so like his own—so like the tale he had told to Patsy when the strikers had chased him into a box car—that his heart must have melted, had it not been for the fact that he

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

was becoming more and more convinced, as the story grew upon him, that the man was lying. Now and then he said to himself in spite of himself, "This must be true," for there were tears in the man's voice, and yet there were things about him that must be explained before he could ride.

"Patsy," said the Philosopher, pausing before the conductor, "if you'll stand half the strain, I'll go buy a ticket for this man to Cheyenne."

"N' no," said the man, visibly affected by this unexpected generosity, "n' no, I can't let you do that. I should be glad of a ride that would cost you nothing and the company nothing; but I can't—I can't take your money," and he turned away, touching the cuff of his coat, first to his right and then to his left eye.

Patsy sighed, and the two men walked again. Five minutes more and the big engine would begin to crawl from the great shed, and the voyager began wondering

❧ CHAPTER XXI ❧

whether he would be on board. The engineer was going round the engine for the last time. The fireman had spread his fire and was leaning leisurely on the arm-rest. The Pullman conductors, with clean cuffs and collars, were putting away their people. The black-faced porters were taking the measures of men as they entered the car. Here comes a gray-haired clergyman, carrying a heavy hand-satchel, and by his side an athletic looking commercial tourist.

One of the black porters glides forward, takes the light hand-grip, containing the travelling man's tooth-brush, nightshirt, and razor, and runs up the step with it.

Now a train arrives from the West, and the people who are going away look into the faces of the people who are coming home, who look neither to the right nor left, but straight ahead at the open gates, and in three minutes the empty cars are being backed away, to be washed and dusted, and made ready for another voyage. How sad

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

and interesting would be the story of the life of a day coach. Beaten, bumped, battered, and banged about in the yards, trampled and spat upon by vulgar voyagers, who get on and off at flag stations, and finally, in a head-end collision, crushed between the heavy vestibuled sleepers and the mighty engine.

But sadder still is the story of a man who has been buffeted about and walked upon by the arrogant of this earth, and to such a story the Philosopher was now listening. The man was talking so rapidly that he almost balled up at times, and had to go back and begin again. At times it seemed to him that the Philosopher, to whom he was talking, was giving little or no attention to his tale; but he was. He was making up his mind.

It is amazing the amount of work that can be done in ten minutes, when all the world is working. Tons of trunks had passed in and out, the long platform had been peo-

❧ CHAPTER XXI ❧

pled and depopulated twice since the two men began their walk, and now another train gave up its human freight to the already crowded city.

Now, as they went up and down, the Philosopher, at each turn, went a little nearer to the engine. Only three minutes remained to him in which to render his decision, which was to help the unhappy man a half-thousand miles on the way to his dying wife, or leave him sadder still because of the failure—to pine and ponder upon man's inhumanity to man.

Patsy, glancing now and then at the big clock on the station wall, searched the sad face of his friend and tried to read there the answer to the man's prayer.

It would be that the man should ride, he had no doubt, for this story was so like the story of this same man, the Philosopher, with which he had come into Patsy's life, and Patsy had resolved never to turn his back upon a man who was down on his luck.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

The Philosopher's face was indecipherable. Finally when they had come to the turning point in the shadow of the mail car, he stopped, leaned against the corner of the tank and said: "I can't make you out, and you haven't made out your case."

"I don't follow you," said the man.

"No? Well suppose I say, for answer, that I'll let you go—sneak away up through the yards and lose yourself; provided you promise not to do it again."

"You talk in riddles. What is it that I am not to do again? You say you have hit the road yourself, and you ought to have sympathy for a fellow out o' luck."

"I have, and that's why I'm going to let you go. Your story is a sad one, and it has softened my heart. It's the story of my own life."

"Then how can you refuse me this favor, that will cost you nothing?"

"Had n't you better go?"

"No, I want you to answer me."

❧ CHAPTER XXI ❧

“ Well, to be frank with you, you are not a tramp. You ’ve got money, and you had red wine with your supper, or your dinner, as you would say.”

The man laughed, a soundless laugh, and tried to look sad.

“ You ’ve got a gold signet ring in your right trousers pocket.”

The man worked his fingers and when the Philosopher thought he must have the ring in his hand, he caught hold of the man’s wrist, jerked the hand from his pocket, and the ring rolled upon the platform. When the man cut off the end of his cigar the Philosopher had seen a white line around one of the fingers of the man’s sea-browned hand. Real tramps, thought the Philosopher, don’t cut off the ends of their cigars. They bite them off, and save the bite. They don’t throw a half-smoked cigar away, but put it, burning if necessary, in their pocket.

“ What do you mean ? ” demanded the man, indignantly.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

"Pick up your ring."

"I have a mind to smash you."

"Do, and you can ride."

"You 've got your nerve."

"You haven't. Why did you stare at that lady's feet, when she was climbing into the car?"

"That's not your business."

"It's all my business now."

"I'll report you for this."

The man started to walk past the big station master, but a strong hand was clapped to the man's breast pocket and when it came away it held a small pocket memorandum.

"See what's in that, Patsy," said the Philosopher, passing the book to the conductor, who had gone forward for the decision.

The man made a move, as if he would snatch the book, but the big hand at his throat twisted the flannel shirt, and choked him. Patsy, holding the book in the glare of his white light, read the record of a man who had been much away from home. He

❧ CHAPTER XXI ❧

had, according to the book, ridden with many conductors, whose names were familiar to Patsy, and had, upon divers occasions, noticed that sometimes some people rode without paying fare. In another place Patsy learned that trainmen and other employees drank beer, or other intoxicating beverages. A case in point was a couple of brakemen on local who, after unloading a half-dozen reapers and a threshing machine at Mendota, had gone into a saloon with the shipper and killed their thirst.

While Patsy was gleaning this interesting information the man writhed and twisted, fought and fumed, but it was in vain, for the hand of the Philosopher was upon his throat.

“Let me go,” gasped the man, “an’ we’ll call it square, an’ I won’t report you.”

“Oh! how good of you.”

“Let me go, I say, you big brute.”

“I wanted to let you go a while ago, and you would n’t have it.”

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

The man pulled back like a horse that won't stand hitched and the button flew from his cheap flannel shirt.

"I'm a goat," said the Philosopher, stroking the man's chest with his big right hand, "if he has n't got on silk underwear."

"Come now, you fellahs," said the man changing his tune, "let me go and you'll always have a friend at Court."

"Be quiet," said the Philosopher, "I'm going to let you go, but tell me, why did you want to do little Patsy, that everybody likes?"

"Because Mr. Paul was so cock sure I couldn't. He bet me a case of champagne that I could n't ride on the Omaha Limited without paying fare."

"And now you lose the champagne."

"It looks that way."

"Poor tramp!"

Patsy had walked to the rear of the train, shouted "All aboard," and the cars were now slipping past the two men.

❧ CHAPTER XXI ❧

“Have you still a mind to smash me?”

“I may be a wolf but this is not my night to howl.”

“Every dog has his day, eh?”

“Curse you.”

“Good night,” said the Philosopher, reaching for a passing car.

“Go to —” said the tramp, and the train faded away out over the switches.

CHAPTER TWENTY-SECOND

THE old master-mechanic, who had insisted that Dan Moran was innocent, from the first, had gone away ; but the new man was willing to give him an engine after the confession of Bill Greene. Having secured work the old engineer called upon the widow, for he could tell her, now, all about the dynamite. Three years had brought little change to her. She might be a little bit stouter, but she was handsomer than ever, Dan thought. The little girl, whom he remembered as a toddling infant, was a sunny child of four years. Bennie was now fourteen and was employed as caller at the round-house, and his wages, thirty dollars a month, kept up the expenses of the home. He had inherited the splendid constitution of his father with the gentleness and honesty of his mother. The foreman was very fond of him, and having been instructed by the old general manager to take good care of the boy, for his mother's sake, he had arranged to send

❧ CHAPTER XXII ❧

him out firing, which would pay better, as soon as he was old enough. So Moran found the little family well, prosperous, and reasonably happy. Presently, when she could wait no longer, Mrs. Cowels asked the old engineer if he had come back to stay, and when he said he had, her face betrayed so much joy that Moran felt half embarrassed, and his heart, which had been so heavy for the past four years, gave a thump that startled him. "Oh! I'm *so* glad," she said earnestly, looking down and playing with her hands; and while her eyes were not upon his, Moran gazed upon the gentle face that had haunted him day and night in his three years' tramp about the world.

"Yes," he said at length, "I'm going back to the 'Q.' It's not Blackwings, to be sure, and the Denver Limited, but it's work, and that's something, for it seems to me that I can bear this idleness no longer. It's the hardest work in the world, just to have nothing to do, month in and month out,

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

and to be compelled to do it. I can't stand it, that's all, and I'm going out on a gravel train to-morrow."

Moran remembered now that Bennie had come to him that morning in the round-house and begged the engineer to "ask for him," to go out as fireman on the gravel train, for it was really a boy's work to keep an engine hot on a side track, but he would not promise, and the boy had been greatly disappointed.

"I'd like to ask for the boy," said Moran, "with your permission. He's been at me all morning, and I'm sure the foreman won't object if you consent."

"But he's so young, Dan; he could never do the work."

"I'll look out for him," said the engineer, nodding his head. "I'll keep him busy waiting on me when we lay up, and when we have a hard run for a meeting-point there's always the head brakeman, and they can usually fire as well as a fireman."

❧ CHAPTER XXII ❧

“I will consent only to please him,” she said, “and because I should like to have him with you.”

He thanked her for the compliment, and took up his hat to go.

“And how often shall I see you now? I mean—how soon—when will Bennie be home again?”

They were standing close together in the little hall, and when he looked deep into her eyes, she became confused and blushed like a school-girl.

“Well, to be honest, we never know on a run of this sort when we may get back to town. It may be a day, a week, or a month,” said Moran. “But I’ll promise you that I will not keep him away longer than is necessary. We don’t work Sundays, of course, and I’ll try and dead-head him in Saturday nights, and you can send him back on the fast freight Sunday evenings. The watchman can fire the engine in an emergency, you know.”

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“But the watchman could n’t run her in an emergency?” queried the little woman.

“I’m afraid not,” said Moran, catching the drift of her mind, and feeling proud of the compliment concealed in the harmless query.

“But I shall enjoy having him come to you once a week to show you that I have not forgotten my promise.”

“And I shall know,” she answered, putting up a warning finger, “by his actions whether you have been good to him.”

“And by the same token I can tell whether you are happy,” rejoined the engineer, taking both her hands in his to say good-bye.

Moran went directly to the round-house and spoke to the foreman, and when Bennie came home that evening he threw himself upon his mother’s neck and wept for very joy. His mother wept, too, for it means something to a mother to have her only boy go out to begin life on the rail. After supper they all went over to the little general store, where she had once been refused credit—

❧ CHAPTER XXII ❧

where she had spent their last dollar for Christmas presents for little Bennie and his father, chiefly his father—and bought two suits of bright blue overclothes for the new fireman. “Mother, I once heard the foreman say that Dan Moran had been like a father to papa,” said Bennie that evening. “Guess he’ll start in being a father to me now, eh! mother?”

Mrs. Cowels smiled and kissed him, and then she cried a little, but only a little, for in spite of all her troubles she felt almost happy that night.

It was nearly midnight when Bennie finished trying on his overclothes and finally fell asleep. It was only four A. M. when he shook his mother gently and asked her to get up and get breakfast.

“What time is it, Bennie?”

“I don’t know, exactly,” said Bennie, “but it must be late. I’ve been up a long, long time. You know you have to put up my lunch, and I want to get down and draw my supplies.

§ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT §

Could n't do it last night 'cause they did n't know what engine we were going to have." Mrs. Cowels got up and prepared breakfast and Bennie ate hurriedly and then began to look out for the caller. He would have gone to the round-house at once but he wanted to sign the callbook at home. How he had envied the firemen who had been called by him. He knew just how it would be written in the callbook :

Extra West, Eng.—Leave 8:15 A. M.

Engineer Moran,—D. Moran 7:15.

Fireman Cowels.—

And there was the blank space where he would write his name. At six o'clock he declared to his mother that he must go down and get his engine hot, and after a hasty good-bye he started. Ten minutes later he came into the round-house and asked the night foreman where his engine was.

"Well," said the foreman, "we have n't got

❧ CHAPTER XXII ❧

your engine yet," and the boy's chin dropped down and rested upon his new blue blouse. "I guess we'll have to send you out on one of the company's engines this trip."

There was a great roar of laughter from the wiping gang and Bennie looked embarrassed. He concluded to say no more to the foreman, but went directly to the blackboard, got the number and found the engine which had been assigned to the gravel train because she was not fit for road work. A sorry old wreck she was, covered with ashes and grease, but it made little difference to Bennie so long as she had a whistle and a bell, and he set to work to stock her up with supplies.

He had drawn supplies for many a tired fireman in his leisure moments and knew very nearly what was needed. But the first thing he did was to open the blower and "get her hot." He got the foreman hot, too, and in a little while he heard that official shout to the hostler to "run the scrap

heap out-doors, and put that fresh kid in the tank."

Bennie didn't mind the reference to the "fresh kid," but he thought the foreman might have called her something better than a scrap heap, but he was a smart boy and knew that it would be no use to "kick."

It was half-past seven when Mrs. Cowels opened the door in answer to the bell, and blushed, and glanced down at her big apron.

"I thought I'd look in on my way to the round-house," said Moran, removing his hat, "for Bennie."

"Why, the dear boy has been gone an hour and a half, but I'm glad (won't you come in?) you called for he has forgotten his gloves."

"Thank you," said the engineer, "the fact is I'm a little late, for I don't know what sort of a scrap pile I have to take out and I'd like, of course, to go underneath her before she leaves the round-house, so I can't come in this morning."

❧ CHAPTER XXII ❧

When Mrs. Cowels had given him the gloves he took her hand to say good-bye, and the wife of one of the new men, who saw it, said afterwards that he held it longer than was necessary, just to say good-bye.

When Dan reached the round-house Bennie was up on top of the old engine oiling the bell. What would an engine without a bell be to a boy? And yet in Europe they have no bells, but there is a vast difference between the American and the European boy.

Moran stopped in the round-house long enough to read the long list of names on the blackboard. They were nearly all new to him, as were the faces about, and he turned away.

The orders ran them extra to Aurora, avoiding regular trains. Moran glanced at the faces of all the incoming engineers as he met and passed them, but with one exception they were all strangers to him. He recognized young Guerin, who had been fireman

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

on Blackwings the night George Cowels was killed, and he was now running a passenger engine.

“How the mushrooms have vegetated hereabouts,” thought Moran, as he glanced up at the stack of the old work engine, but he was never much of a kicker, so he would not kick now. This wasn’t much of a run, but it beat looking for a better one.

“Not so much coal, Bennie. Take your clinker hook and level it off. That’s it,—see the black smoke? Keep your furnace door shut. Now look at your stack again. See the yellow smoke hanging ’round? Rake her down again. Now it’s black, and if it burns clear—see there? There is no smoke at all; that shows that her fire is level. Sweep up your deck now while you rest.”

CHAPTER TWENTY-THIRD

ONE night when the Limited was roaring up from the Missouri River against one of those March rains that come out of the east, there came to Patsy one of the temptations that are hardest for a man of his kind nature to withstand. The trial began at Galesburg. Patsy was hugging the rear end of the day coach in order to keep out of the cruel storm, when his eyes rested upon the white face of a poorly clad woman. She stood motionless as a statue, voiceless as the Sphinx, with the cold rain beating upon her uplifted face, until Patsy cried "All aboard." Then she pulled herself together and climbed into the train. The conductor, leaving his white light upon the platform of the car, stepped down and helped the dripping woman into the coach. When the train had dashed away again up the rain-swept night, Patsy found the wet passenger rocking to and fro on the little seat that used to run lengthwise of the car

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

up near the stove, before the use of steam heat.

"Ticket," said the conductor.

The woman lifted her eyes to his, but seemed to be staring at something beyond.

"Ticket, please."

"Yes—y-e-a-s," she spoke as though the effort caused her intense pain. "I want—to—go to Chicago."

"Yes. Have you a ticket?"

"Yes."

"Where is it?"

"Where's what?"

"Where's your ticket?"

"I ain't got no ticket."

"Have you got money?"

"No. I do' want money. I jist want you to take me to Chicago."

"But I can't take you without you pay fare."

"Can't you? I've been standin' there in the rain all night, but nobody would let me on the train—all the trains is gone but

❧ CHAPTER XXIII ❧

this one. I'd most give up when you said, 'Git on,' er somethin'."

"Why do you want to go to Chicago?"

"Oh! I must be there fur the trial."

"Who's trial?"

"Terrence's. They think my boy, Terrence, killed a man, an' I'm goin' up to tell th' judge. Of course, they don't know Terrence. He's wild and runs around a heap, but he's not what you may call bad."

The poor woman was half-crazed by her grief, and her blood was chilled by the cold rain. She could not have been wetter at the bottom of Lake Michigan. When she ceased speaking, she shivered.

"It was good in you to let me git on, an' I thank you very kindly."

"But I can't carry you unless you can pay."

"Oh! I kin walk soon's we git ther."

"But you can't get there. I'll have to stop and put you off."

The unhappy woman opened her eyes and mouth and stared at the conductor.

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

“Put—me—off?”

“Yes.”

“It’s rainin’ ain’t it?” She shivered again, and tried to look out into the black night.

“Don’t you know better than to get onto a train without a ticket or money to pay your fare?”

“Yes; but they’ll hang Terrence, they’ll hang ’im, they’ll hang ’im,” and she moaned and rocked herself.

Patsy went on through the train and when he came back the woman was still rocking and staring blankly at the floor, as he had found her before. She had to look at him for some time before she could remember him.

“Can’t you go no faster?”

Patsy sighed.

“What time is it?”

“Six o’clock.”

“Will we git there by half after nine?—th’ trial’s at ten.”

“Yes.”

Patsy sat down and looked at the wreck.

❧ CHAPTER XXIII ❧

“Now, a man who could put such a woman off, in such a storm, at such an hour, and with a grief like that,” said Patsy to himself, “would pasture a goat on his grandmother’s grave.”

When Patsy woke at two o’clock that afternoon, he picked up a noon edition of an all-day paper, and the very first word he read was “Not guilty.” That was the heading of the police news.

“There was a pathetic scene in Judge Meyer’s court this morning at the preliminary hearing of the case of Terrence Cassidy, charged with the murder of the old farmer at Spring Bank on Monday last. All efforts to draw a confession from Cassidy had failed, and the detectives had come to the conclusion that he was either very innocent or very guilty—there was no purgatory for Terrence; it was heaven or the hot place, according to the detectives. For once the detectives were right. Terrence was very in-

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

nocent. It appears that the tramp who was killed on the Wabash last night made a confession to the trainmen, after being hit by the engine, to the effect that he had murdered the old farmer, and afterwards, at the point of an empty pistol, forced a young Irishman, whom he met upon the railroad track, to exchange clothes with him. That accounts for the blood stains upon Cassidy's coat, but, of course, nobody credited his story.

"The tramp's confession, however, was wired to the general manager of the Wabash by the conductor of the out-going train, together with a description of the tramp's clothes, which description tallies with that given of those garments worn by Cassidy.

"This good news did not reach the court, however, until after the prisoner had been arraigned. When asked the usual question, 'Guilty, or not guilty?' the boy stood up and was about to address some remarks to the court, when suddenly there rushed into

§ CHAPTER XXIII §

the room about the sorriest looking woman who ever stood before a judge. She was poorly clad, wet as a rat, haggard and pale. Her voice was hoarse and unearthly. Nobody seemed to see her enter. Suddenly, as if she had risen from the floor, she stood at the railing, raised a trembling hand and shouted, as well as she could shout, 'Not guilty!'

"Before the bewildered judge could lift his gavel, the prosecuting attorney rose, dramatically, and asked to be allowed to read a telegram that had just been received, which purported to be the signed confession of a dying man.

"As might be expected, there were not many dry eyes in that court when, a moment later, the boy was sobbing on his mother's wet shoulder, and she, rocking to and fro, was saying softly 'Poor Terrence, my poor Terrence.'"

As Patsy was walking back from Hooley's

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Theatre, where he had gone to get tickets (this was his night off), he met the acting chief clerk in one of the departments to which, under the rules then in vogue, he owed allegiance.

"I want to see you at the office," said the amateur official, and Patsy was very much surprised at the brevity of the speech. He went up to his room and tried to read, but the ever recurring thought that he was "wanted at the office" disturbed him and he determined to go at once and have it out.

The conductor removed his hat in the august presence and asked, timidly, what was wanted.

"You ought to know," said the great judge.

"But I don't," said Patsy, taking courage as he arrayed himself, with a clear conscience, on the defensive.

"Are you in the habit of carrying people on the Denver Limited who have no transportation?"

❧ CHAPTER XXIII ❧

“No, sir.”

“Then, how does it happen that you carried a woman from Galesburg to Chicago last night who had neither ticket nor money, so far as we know? It will do you no good to deny it, for I have the report of a special agent before me, and—”

“I have no desire to deny it, sir. All I deny is that this is your business.”

“What?” yelled the official.

“I beg your pardon, sir. I should not have spoken in that way; but what I wish to say and wish you to understand is that I owe you no explanation.”

“I stand for the company, sir.”

“So do I, and have stood as many years as you have months. I have handled as many dollars for them as you have ever seen dimes, and, what’s more to the point, I stand ready to quit the moment the management loses confidence in me, and with the assurance of a better job. Can all the great men say as much?”

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

The force and vehemence of the excited and indignant little Irishman caused the "management" to pause in its young career.

"Will you tell me why you carried this woman who had no ticket?"

"No. I have rendered unto Cæsar that which is Cæsar's. For further particulars, see my report," and with that Patsy walked out.

"Let's see, let's see," said the "management"; "'Two passengers, Galesburg to Chicago, one ticket, one cash fare.' What an ass I've made of myself; but, just wait till I catch that Hawkshaw."

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOURTH

*“ Always together in sunshine and rain,
Facing the weather atop o’ the train,
Watching the meadows move under the stars ;
Always together atop o’ the cars.”*

PATSY was just singing it soft and low to himself, and not even thinking of the song, for he was not riding “atop o’ the cars” now. With his arm run through the bail of his nickel-plated, white light, he was taking the numbers and initials of the cars in the Denver Limited. He was a handsome fellow, and the eight or ten years that had passed lightly over his head since he came singing himself into the office of the general manager to ask for a pass over a competing line, had rounded out his figure, and given him a becoming mustache, but they had left just a shade of sadness upon his sunny face. The little mother whom he used to visit at Council Bluffs had fallen asleep down by the dark Missouri, and he would not see her again until he reached the end

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

of his last run. And that's what put the shadow upon his sunny face. The white light, held close to his bright, new uniform, flashed over his spotless linen, and set his buttons ablaze.

"Ah there, my beauty! any room for dead-heads to-night?"

Patsy turned to his questioner, closed his train-book and held out his hand: "Always room for the Irish; where are you tagged for?"

"The junction."

"But we don't stop there."

"I know, but I thought Moran might slow her down to about twenty posts, and I can fall off—I missed the local."

"I've got a new man," said Patsy, "and he'll be a bit nervous to-night, but if we hit the top of Zero Hill on the dot we'll let you off; if not, we'll carry you through, and you can come back on No. 4."

"Thank you," said the Philosopher, "but I'm sorry to trouble you."

❧ CHAPTER XXIV ❧

“And I don’t intend you shall; just step back to the outside gate and flag Mr. and Mrs. Moran, and don’t let him buy a ticket for the sleeper; I’ve got passes for him right through to the coast.”

As the Philosopher went back to “flag,” Patsy went forward to the engine. “If you hit Zero Junction on time, Guerin, I wish you’d slow down and let the agent off,” said the conductor.

“And if I’m late?”

“Don’t stop.”

“Well,” said the young driver, “we’ll not be apt to stop, for it’s a wild night, Patsy; a slippery rail and almost a head wind.”

“Nothing short of a blizzard can check Blackwings,” said Patsy, going to the rear. The day coaches were already well filled, and the sleeping-car conductors were busy putting their people away when the Philosopher came down the platform accompanied by the veteran engineer, his pretty wife, and her bright little girl. Mrs. Moran

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

and her daughter entered the sleeper, while her husband and the station master remained outside to finish their cigars.

"What a magnificent train," observed the old engineer, as the two men stood looking at the Limited.

"Finest in all the West," the Philosopher replied. "Open from the tank to the tail-lamps: all ablaze with electric lights; just like the Atlantic liners we read about in the magazines. Ever been on one of those big steamers, Dan?"

"No, and I never want to be. Never get me out o' sight o' land. Then they're too blamed slow; draggin' along in the darkness, eighteen and twenty miles an hour, and nowhere to jump."

"And yet they say we kill more people than they do."

"I know they say so," said the engineer, "but they kill 'em so everlastingly dead. A man smashed up in a wreck on the road *may* recover, but a man drowned a thousand miles from anywhere has no show."

❧ CHAPTER XXIV ❧

Patsy, coming from the station, joined the two dead-heads, and Moran, glancing at his watch, asked the cause of delay.

“Waiting for a party of English tourists,” said Patsy; “they’re coming over the Grand Trunk, and the storm has delayed them.”

“And that same storm will delay you to-night, my boy, if I’m any guesser,” observed the old engineer. “I’d go over and ride with Guerin, but I’m afraid he wouldn’t take it well. That engine is as quick as chain-lightning, and with a greasy rail like this she’ll slip going down hill, and the more throttle he gives her the slower she’ll go. And what’s more, she’ll do it so smoothly, that, blinded by the storm, he’ll never know she’s slipping till she tears her fire all out and comes to a dead stall.”

The old engineer knew just how to prevent all that, but he was afraid that to offer any suggestion might wound the pride of the young man, whom he did not know very well. True, he had asked the master-mechanic to put

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Guerin on the run, but only because he disliked the Reading man who was next in line. Mrs. Moran came from the car now, and asked to be taken to the engine where she and her daughter might say good-bye to Bennie who was now the regular fireman on Blackwings. "Bennie," said his stepfather, "see that your sand-pipes are open." While Bennie talked with his mother and sister, Moran chatted with the engineer. "I want to thank you," said Guerin, "for helping me to this run during your absence, and I shall try to take good care of both Bennie and Blackwings."

"It isn't worth mentioning," said Moran with a wave of his hand, "they do these things to suit themselves."

"Now, if she's got any tricks," said Guerin, "I'd be glad to know them, for I don't want to disgrace the engine by losing time. I've been trying to pump the boy, but he's as close as a clam."

"Well, that's not a common fault with fire-

❧ CHAPTER XXIV ❧

men," said Moran, with his quiet smile. "The only thing I can say about Blackwings," he went on, for he had been aching to say it, "is that she's smart, and on a rail like this you'll have to humor her a little—drop her down a notch and ease up on the throttle, especially when you have a heavy train. She's mighty slippery."

Guerin thanked him for the tip, and the old engineer, feeling greatly relieved, went back to where Patsy and the Philosopher were "railroading." They had been discussing the vestibule. The Philosopher had remarked that recently published statistics established the fact that when a solid vestibuled train came into collision with an old-fashioned open train of the same weight, the latter would go to splinters while the vestibuled train would remain intact, on the principle that a sleeping car is harder to wreck when the berths are down, because they brace the structure. "The vestibule," continued the Philosopher, "is a life-saver, and a great

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

comfort to people who travel first class, but this same inventor, who has perfected so many railway appliances, has managed in one way or another to help all mankind. He has done as much for the tramp as for the millionaire. Take the high wheel, for instance. Why, I remember when I was 'on the road' that you had to get down and crawl to get under a sleeper, and sit doubled up like a crawfish all the while. I remember when the Pennsylvania put on a lot of big, twelve-wheeled cars. A party of us got together under a water tank down near Pittsburgh and held a meeting. It was on the Fourth of July and we sent a copy of our resolutions to the president of the sleeping car company at Chicago. The report was written with charcoal upon some new shingles which we found near, and sent by express, 'collect.' I remember how it read :
'At the First Annual Convention of the Tramps' Protective Association of North America, it was

❧ CHAPTER XXIV ❧

Resolved: That this union feels itself deeply indebted to the man who has introduced upon American railways the high wheel and the triple truck. And be it further

Resolved: That all self-respecting members of this fraternity shall refrain from riding on, or in any way encouraging, such slow-freight lines as may still hold to the old-fashioned, eight-wheeled, dirt-dragging sleeper, blind to their own interest and dead to the world.' ”

“All aboard,” cried Patsy, and the Denver Limited left Chicago just ten minutes late. The moment they had passed beyond the shed the storm swept down from the Northwest and plastered the wet snow against the windows. Slowly they worked their way out of the crowded city, over railway crossings, between guarded gates, and left the lights of Chicago behind them. The scores of passengers behind the double-glassed windows chatted or perused the evening papers.

Nearly all the male members of the English

party had crowded into the smoking-rooms of the sleepers to enjoy their pipes. Patsy, after working the train, sat down to visit with the Morans. The old engineer had been hurt in a wreck and the company had generously given him a two months' leave of absence, with transportation and full pay, and he was going to spend the time in Southern California. The officials were beginning to share the opinion of Mr. Watchem, the famous detective who had declared, when Moran was in prison, that he ought to be wearing a medal instead of handcuffs. He had battled, single-handed and alone, with a desperado who was all fenced about with firearms, saved the company's property and, it might be, the lives of passengers. Later he had taken the dynamite from the engine to prevent its exploding, wrecking the machine and killing the crew. And rather than inform upon the wretch who had committed the crime he had gone to prison, and had borne disgrace.

❧ CHAPTER XXIV ❧

With the exception of Patsy, Moran, and his wife, none of the passengers gave a thought to the "fellows up ahead." Before leaving Chicago Guerin had advised the youthful fireman to stretch a piece of bell-rope from the cab to the tank to prevent him from falling out through the gangway, for he intended to make up the ten minutes if it were in the machine. The storm had increased so that the rail had passed the slippery stage, for it is only a damp rail that is greasy. A very wet rail is almost as good as a dry one, and Blackwings was picking her train up beautifully. This was the engine upon which Guerin had made his maiden trip as fireman, and the thought of that dreadful night saddened him. Here was where Cowels sat when he showed him the cruel message. Here in this very window he had held him, and there was the identical arm-rest over which hung the body of the dead engineer. And this was his boy. How the years fly! He looked at

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

the boy, and the boy was looking at him with his big, sad eyes. The furnace door was ajar, and the cab was as light as day. Guerin had always felt that in some vague way he was responsible for Cowels's death, and now the boy's gaze made him uncomfortable. Already the snow had banked against the windows on his side and closed them. He crossed over to the fireman's side, and looked ahead. The headlight was almost covered, but they were making good time. He guessed, from the vibration that marked the revolutions of the big drivers, that she must be making fifty miles an hour. Now she began to roll, and her bell began to toll, like a distant church-bell tolling for the dead, and he crossed back to his own side. Both Moran and Patsy were pleased for they knew the great engine was doing her work. "When one of these heavy sleepers stops swinging," said Patsy, "and just seems to stand still and shiver, she's going; and when she begins to slam her

❧ CHAPTER XXIV ❧

flanges up against the rail, first one side and then the other, she has passed a sixty-mile gait, and that's what this car is doing now."

Mrs. Moran said good-night, and disappeared behind the silken curtain of "lower six," where her little girl was already sound asleep. Only a few men remained in the smoking-rooms, and they were mostly English.

Steam began to flutter from the dome above the back of Blackwings. The fireman left the door on the latch to keep her cool and save the water; the engineer opened the injector a little wider to save the steam; the fireman closed the door again to keep her hot; and that's the way men watch each other on an engine, to save a drop of water or an ounce of steam, and that's the best trick of the trade.

Guerin looked out at the fireman's window again. The headlight was now entirely snowed in and the big black machine was

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

poking her nose into the night at the rate of a mile a minute.

“My God! how she rolls,” said Guerin, going back to his place again. Of a sudden she began to quicken her pace, as though the train had parted. She might be slipping—he opened the sand lever. No, she was holding the rail, and then he knew that they had tipped over Zero Hill. He cut her back a notch, but allowed the throttle to remain wide open. Bennie saw the move and left the door ajar again. He knew where they were and wondered that Guerin did not ease off a bit, but he had been taught by Moran to fire and leave the rest to the engineer. Guerin glanced at his watch. He was one minute over-due at Zero Junction, a mile away. At the end of another minute he would have put that station behind him, less than two minutes late. He was making a record for himself. He was demonstrating that it is the daring young driver who has the sand to go up against the darkness as

❧ CHAPTER XXIV ❧

fast as wheels can whirl. He wished the snow was off the headlight. He knew the danger of slamming a train through stations without a ray of light to warn switchmen and others, but he could not bring himself to send the boy out to the front end in that storm the way she was rolling. And she did roll; and with each roll the bell tolled! tolled!! like a church bell tolling for the dead. The snow muffled the rail, and the cry of the whistle would not go twenty rods against that storm; and twenty rods, when you're making a mile and a half in a minute, gives barely time to cross yourself.

About the time they tipped over the hill the night yard master came from the telegraph office, down at the junction, and twirled a white light at a switch engine that stood on a spur with her nose against an empty express car. "Back up," he shouted: "and kick that car in on the house track." "The Limited's due in a minute," said the

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

switch engineer, turning the gauge lamp upon his watch.

“Well, you’re runnin’ the engine—I’m runnin’ the yard,” said the official, giving his lamp another whirl, and the engine with the express car backed away. The yard master unbent sufficiently to say to the switchman on the engine that the Limited was ten minutes late, adding, that she would probably be fifteen at the junction, for it was storming all along the line. The snow had packed in about the switch-bridle and made it hard to move, but finally, with the help of the fireman, the switch was turned, and the yard engine stood on the main track. The engineer glanced over his shoulder, but there was nothing behind him save the storm-swept night. Suddenly he felt the earth tremble, and, filled with indescribable horror, he pulled the whistle open and leaped through the window. The cry of the yard engine was answered by a wild shriek from Blackwings. Guerin closed the

❧ CHAPTER XXIV ❧

throttle, put on the air and opened the sand-valves. The sound of that whistle, blown back over the train, fell upon the ears of Patsy and the two dead-heads, and filled them with fear. A second later they felt the clamp of brake-shoes applied with full force; felt the grinding of sand beneath the wheels, and knew that something was wrong. The old engineer tore the curtains back from "lower six," and spread out his arms, placing one foot against the foot of the berth, and threw himself on top of the two sleepers. Patsy and the Philosopher braced themselves against the seat in front of them, and waited the shock. Bennie heard the whistle, too, and went out into the night, not knowing where or how he would light. Young Guerin had no time to jump. He had work to do. His left hand fell from the whistle-rope to the air-brake, and it was applied even while his right hand shoved the throttle home, and opened the sand-valves—and then the crash came. Being higher built,

❧ SNOW ON THE HEADLIGHT ❧

Blackwings shot right over the top of the yard engine, turned end for end, and lay with her pilot under the mail car, which was telescoped into the express car. The balance of the train, surging, straining, and trembling, came to a stop, with all wheels on the rail, thanks to the faithful driver, and the open sand-pipes. The train had scarcely stopped when the conductor and the two dead-heads were at the engine, searching, amid the roar of escaping steam, for the engine crew. A moment later Bennie came limping in from a neighboring field where he had been wallowing in a snow-drift. The operator, rushing from the station, stumbled over the body of a man. It was Guerin. When the engine turned over he had been hurled from the cab and slammed up against the depot, fifty feet away. The rescuers, searching about the wreck, shouted and called to the occupants of the mail car, but the wail of the wounded engine drowned their voices. In a

❧ CHAPTER XXIV ❧

little while both men were rescued almost unhurt. Now all the employees and many passengers gathered about the engineer. The station master held Guerin's head upon his knee, while Moran made a hasty examination of his hurt. There was scarcely a bone in his body that was not broken, but he was still alive. He opened his eyes slowly, and looked about. "I'm cold!" he said distinctly. Patsy held his white light close to the face of the wounded man. His eyes seemed now to be fixed upon something far away. "Mercy, but I'm cold!" he said pathetically. Now all the women were weeping, and there were tears in the eyes of most of the men. "Raise him up a little," said Moran. "It's getting dark," said the dying man, "Oh, *so* dark! It must be the snow—" and he closed his eyes again—"snow—on—the headlight."

THE END



THE STORY OF THE WEST SERIES.

Edited by RIPLEY HITCHCOCK.

Each, Illustrated, 12mo, cloth, \$1.50.

THE STORY OF THE RAILROAD.

By CY WARMAN, *author of "The Express Messenger," etc. With Maps, and many Illustrations by B. West Clinedinst and from Photographs.*

As we understand it, the editor's ruling idea in this series has not been to present chronology or statistics or set essays on the social and political development of the great West, but to give to us vivid pictures of the life and the times in the period of great development, and to let us see the men at their work, their characters, and their motives. The choice of an author has been fortunate. In Mr. Warman's book we are kept constantly reminded of the fortitude, the suffering, the enterprise, and the endurance of the pioneers. We see the glowing imagination of the promoter, and we see the engineer scouting the plains and the mountains, fighting the Indians, freezing and starving, and always full of a keen enthusiasm for his work and of noble devotion to his duty. The construction train and the Irish boss are not forgotten, and in the stories of their doings we find not only courage and adventure, but wit and humor. — *The Railroad Gazette.*

THE STORY OF THE COWBOY.

By E. HOUGH, *author of "The Singing Mouse Stories," etc. Illustrated by William L. Wells and C. M. Russell.*

Mr. Hough is to be thanked for having written so excellent a book. The cowboy story, as this author has told it, will be the cowboy's fitting eulogy. This volume will be consulted in years to come as an authority on past conditions of the far West. For fine literary work the author is to be highly complimented. Here, certainly, we have a choice piece of writing. — *New York Times.*

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

THE STORY OF THE MINE.

As Illustrated by the Great Comstock Lode of Nevada.

By CHARLES HOWARD SHINN.

Mr. Shinn writes from . . . such acquaintance as could only be gained by familiarity with the men and the places described, . . . and by the fullest appreciation of the pervading spirit of the Western mining camps of yesterday and to-day. Thus his book has a distinctly human interest, apart from its value as a treatise on things material. — *Review of Reviews*.

THE STORY OF THE INDIAN.

By GEORGE BIRD GRINNELL, *author of "Pawnee Hero Stories," "Blackfoot Lodge Tales," etc.*

Only an author qualified by personal experience could offer us a profitable study of a race so alien from our own as is the Indian in thought, feeling, and culture. Only long association with Indians can enable a white man measurably to comprehend their thoughts and enter into their feelings. Such association has been Mr. Grinnell's. — *New York Sun*.



Books by Graham Travers.

WINDYHAUGH.

A Novel. By GRAHAM TRAVERS, *author of "Mona Maclean. Medical Student," "Fellow Travellers," etc.*
12mo. Cloth, \$1.50.

"Windyhaugh" shows an infinitely more mature skill and more subtle humor than "Mona Maclean" and a profounder insight into life. The psychology in Dr. Todd's remarkable book is all of the right kind; and there is not in English fiction a more careful and penetrating analysis of the evolution of a woman's mind than is given in Wilhelmina Galbraith; but "Windyhaugh" is not a book in which there is only one "star" and a crowd of "supers." Every character is limned with a conscientious care that bespeaks the true artist, and the analytical interest of the novel is rigorously kept in its proper place and

is only one element in a delightful story. It is a supremely interesting and wholesome book, and in an age when excellence of technique has reached a remarkable level, "Windyhaugh" compels admiration for its brilliancy of style. Dr. Todd paints on a large canvas, but she has a true sense of proportion. — *Blackwood's Magazine*.

For truth to life, for adherence to a clear line of action, for arrival at the point toward which it has aimed from the first, such a book as "Windyhaugh" must be judged remarkable. There is vigor and brilliancy. It is a book that must be read from the beginning to the end and that it is a satisfaction to have read. — *Boston Journal*.

Its easy style, its natural characters, and its general tone of earnestness assure its author a high rank among contemporary novelists. — *Chicago Tribune*.

MONA MACLEAN.

Medical Student. 12mo. Paper, 50 cents. Cloth, \$1.00.

A pleasure in store for you if you have not read this volume. The author has given us a thoroughly natural series of events, and drawn her characters like an artist. It is the story of a woman's struggles with her own soul. She is a woman of resource, a strong woman, and her career is interesting from beginning to end. — *New York Herald*.

"Mona Maclean" is a bright, healthful, winning story. — *New York Mail and Express*.

A high-bred comedy. — *New York Times*.

FELLOW TRAVELLERS.

12mo. Paper, 50 cents. Cloth, \$1.00.

The stories are well told; the literary style is above the average, and the character drawing is to be particularly praised. . . . Altogether, the little book is a model of its kind, and its reading will give pleasure to people of taste. — *Boston Saturday Evening Gazette*.

"Fellow Travellers" is a collection of very brightly written tales, all dealing, as the title implies, with the mutual relations of people thrown together casually while travelling. — *London Saturday Review*.

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

“*A Book that will Live.*”

DAVID HARUM.

A Story of American Life. By EDWARD NOYES WESTCOTT. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.50.

Thoroughly a pure, original, and fresh American type. David Harum is a character whose qualities of mind and heart, eccentricities, and dry humor will win for his creator noble distinction. Buoyancy, life, and cheerfulness are dominant notes. In its vividness and force the story is a strong, fresh picture of American life. Original and true, it is worth the same distinction which is accorded the *genre* pictures of peculiar types and places sketched by Mr. George W. Cable, Mr. Joel Chandler Harris, Mr. Thomas Nelson Page, Miss Wilkins, Miss Jewett, Mr. Garland, Miss French, Miss Murfree, Mr. Gilbert Parker, Mr. Owen Wister, and Bret Harte. — *Boston Herald*.

Mr. Westcott has done for central New York what Mr. Cable, Mr. Page, and Mr. Harris have done for different parts of the South, and what Miss Jewett and Miss Wilkins are doing for New England, and Mr. Hamlin Garland for the West. . . . “David Harum” is a masterly delineation of an American type. . . . Here is life with all its joys and sorrows. . . . David Harum lives in these pages as he will live in the mind of the reader. . . . He deserves to be known by all good Americans; he is one of them in boundless energy, in large-heartedness, in shrewdness, and in humor. — *The Critic*.

True, strong, and thoroughly alive, with a humor like that of Abraham Lincoln and a nature as sweet at the core. — *Boston Literary World*.

We give Edward Noyes Westcott his true place in American letters—placing him as a humorist next to Mark Twain, as a master of dialect above Lowell, as a descriptive writer equal to Bret Harte, and, on the whole, as a novelist on a par with the best of those who live and have their being in the heart of hearts of American readers. If the author is dead—lamentable fact—his book will live. — *Philadelphia Item*.

The main character . . . will probably take his place in time beside Joel Chandler Harris’s and Thomas Nelson Page’s and Miss Wilkins’s creations. — *Chicago Times-Herald*.

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY, NEW YORK.

D. B. Updike
The Merrymount Press
104 Chestnut St.
Boston



26817

UC SOUTHERN REGIONAL LIBRARY FACILITY



A 000 695 106 5

